Conceptualizing Institutional Capacity Building Through a Learning Process Set in Motion by a Foundation

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Abstract

Employing critical pedagogy and transformative theory as a theoretical framework, I examined a learning process associated with building capacity in community-based organizations (CBOs) through an investigation of the Institutional Capacity Building Program (ICBP) initiated by a Foundation. The study sought to: (a) examine the importance of institutional capacity building for individual and community development; (b) investigate elements of a process associated with a program and characteristics of a learning process for building capacity in CBOs; and (c) analyze the Foundation's approach to synthesizing, systematizing, and sharing learning. The study used a narrative research design that included 3 one-on-one, hour-long interviews with 2 women having unique vantage points in ICBP: one is a program facilitator working at the Foundation and the other runs a CBO supported by the Foundation. The interviews' semi-structured questions allowed interviewees to share stories regarding their experience with the learning process of ICB and enabled themes to emerge from their day-to-day experience. Through the analysis of this learning process for institutional capacity building, a few lessons can be drawn from the experience of the Foundation.

Acknowledgments

This study represents the generosity of time, knowledge, and love shared by family, friends, and teachers. Each of these individuals has forgotten their own selves and bent their energies towards the education of another. This study is the result of their endless generosity of spirit.

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Foundation for the opportunity to learn from their rich experiences in the field of ICB for community development. In particular, I am grateful to Sally and Jane for their time, the care with which they shared their experience, and the wealth of knowledge that they contributed to the study. I would also like to thank my colleague and advisor, Dr. Dolana Mogadime for being there with me through every step of this process. Your advice and experience shed light on each aspect of the study and your honest and encouraging approach inspired me to move forward. In addition, I am very grateful to the members of my thesis committee, which included, Dr. Corrie Giles, Dr. Jennifer Rowsell, and the external examiner, Dr. Harry Smaller for all of the helpful questions that they asked and the guidance that they generously offered. Their approach to my study was encouraging, open and collaborative and I am very thankful for how much they enriched this journey.

My parents have always encouraged me to pursue learning and knowledge not for my own benefit but for the betterment of others. Such a disposition is indicative of the spirit of service and generosity that they have always had towards others. After God, my parents are my first and foremost educators and their dedication to the field of education has been inspiring to me ever since I was

a young child. I am indebted to them for their endless support and encouragement in all that I do.

Lastly, I would like to thank my husband who is both an avid reader and an excellent writer. He has assisted me to see the craft of writing as something that develops over time and has encouraged me to develop this craft. His love and support are the greatest source of strength for me. My twin sister Bronwyn and my other three siblings have been supportive of me through the most grueling parts of this process. My siblings are really the individuals whom I have grown with and the ones who I have learned the most from. I am grateful to them for their constant friendship, compassion and love.

To each and every one who is mentioned here and those who are not, I offer my humble and profound gratitude for your contributions to this small effort.

This thesis is dedicated to my mother whose love and endless support is my greatest source of strength.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The Foundation under consideration is a non-governmental development organization whose educational programs release the potential of individuals and institutions to contribute to the advancement of their communities. During their two decades of operation, they have pursued their aims through the design and implementation of educational programs with the goal of fostering development.

Their initiatives fall within four broad areas of activity: nurturing the growth of community-based organizations (CBOs), building the capacity of rural women, releasing the potential of junior youth, and promoting the development of formal institutions of education (The Foundation, 2011a). My exploration of their initiatives will centre largely on their efforts in the first area of activity—the Institutional Capacity Building Program (ICBP)—that provides an example of a learning process that seeks to build institutional capacity.

This study analyzes a learning process associated with institutional capacity building through an investigation of the ICBP created by a Foundation. Using critical pedagogy and transformative theory as a theoretical framework, I will examine three questions regarding (a) the importance of institutional capacity building for individual and community development, (b) the elements of a process associated with a program and the characteristics of a learning process for building capacity in community-based organizations, and (c) the Foundation's approach to synthesizing, systematizing, and sharing learning.

The aim of my research is to analyze a learning process. I do not intend to evaluate a program or assess the outcomes of the ICBP nor do I plan to examine the entirety of the Foundation's programming. My research will in no way suggest that the

Foundation's ICBP is to be viewed as a model for institutional capacity building. Rather I hope to examine some of the lessons gained from the learning process associated with the ICBP.

The study under consideration will be undertaken through a narrative research design. In so doing, I will carry out three interviews with two women who are each involved in the ICBP from a unique vantage point: one is a facilitator of the program that works at the Foundation and the second runs a CBO, which is supported by the Foundation. Each participant will provide a unique perspective on the learning process according to their distinct roles—Sally, the facilitator, will convey her experiences working with the CBO's as a member of the Foundation itself and Jane will convey her learning as a participant of the program initiating a CBO. The names used for the two participants in the study are pseudonyms in order to protect their privacy.

Each of the participants is engaged in one learning process from two perspectives. Only having one participant would not have provided enough depth and breadth needed to analyze the multi-faceted process under study. Both Jane and Sally are participants in the program and have insights to share about the nature and importance of institutional capacity building. Sally was a part of establishing the learning process associated with the ICBP and has experience supporting many individuals as participants of the program. She has a clear picture of the program elements and characteristics but has never gone through the program herself. Jane on the other hand, has gained experience advancing through the stages of the program and has a unique view of the characteristics of the learning process as a participant. Each has a view that is both akin and distinct from the other. There were three 1-hour, one-on-one interviews carried out with both participants

using semi-structured questions. The semi-structured questions provided an opportunity for the interviewees to share stories regarding their experience with the learning process of ICB and this enabled themes to emerge from their day-to-day experience. Providing structured questions would not enable a story line to emerge from which lessons could be drawn. Instead, the semi-structured questions enable Sally and Jane to construct a story line according to their experiences generated from the learning process of ICB.

In addition to data collected through interviews, I will also analyze documents created by the Foundation. The document analysis will enable themes to emerge that may be similar or different from the experiences shared by the participants during the interviews. In order to give context to the site and participants, I will also share my observations of the daily activities of a CBO that the Foundation supports. My trip to the Foundation and community-based organization took place between September 9 to 21, 2012.

Advancing a Process of Capacity Building: Development and Origins

The Foundation is a non-profit, non-governmental development organization founded in 1990 with the aim to create and implement programs that foster the development of capabilities of rural populations to contribute to social and economic development of their communities (The Foundation, 2011a). In reaching this aim, the Foundation partners with an array of government agencies and academic institutions.

Its most recent initiative launched the ICBP, which "facilitates the establishment of community-based organizations in… rural regions and provides training and support to build the capacity of these organizations as they implement the Environmental Action and Junior Youth Empowerment Program" (The Foundation, 2011, para.1).

The Foundation facilitates the establishment of CBOs and assists them to become increasingly more effective at implementing the JYEP and EAP through collaboration with government and management of financial and human resources in order to serve their communities (The Foundation, 2011a). It currently works with 22 CBOs, 15 of which implement the JYEP and seven of which implement the EAP.

The efforts of the Foundation began on a modest scale and grew organically as experience was gained; the development of the capability to read their own reality and widen their programmatic scope in order to meet the needs of society increased over time, propelling their growth forward; capacity was built within an emerging nucleus of individuals extending their efforts to reach more and more people; and the methods and instruments for learning were further refined as experience was gained. This approach describes a mode of learning, which is one of the many principles that it suggests characterizes the development of the Foundation.

Statement of the Problem

Communities are bombarded by organizations that want to contribute to the betterment of its peoples. Notwithstanding the good intentions of such organizations, very few have participated in a learning process that develops their capacity to effectively meet the needs of the communities they serve. Organizations provide the means through which individual and community capacity is channeled. In addition, they often take on the role of mediating between the individual and community. In a review of the literature, Chapman and Kirk (2001) state that the role organizations play in the community development process is indispensable for the long-term support of community involvement, empowerment, and sustainability.

In carrying out a brief analysis of the literature, it appears as though there is more literature regarding learning processes associated with building capacity of "individuals" and "communities" and less research undertaken on learning processes that develop capacity within "institutions" or "organizations". I have decided to carry out this study to explore one example of a learning process that seeks to develop institutional capacity in CBOs.

Most community-based organizations do not provide training or ongoing support for their employees and volunteers (Chapman et al, 2001). The identification and analysis of training needs for CBOs is a priority, even though most training initiatives are introduced too late (Chapman & Kirk, 2001; Henderson & Mayo, 1990). As such, I hope to unpack some of the lessons learned within stages of the program process and characteristics of the learning process of ICB set in motion by the Foundation.

Since research attention has been directed toward developing capacity in individuals and communities (Chapman & Kirk, 2001; Chaskin, 2011; Craig 2007; Galbraith, 1990; Giddens, 1979; Sinclair, 2002) and it appears that less research has focused on a learning process associated with institutional capacity with community-based organizations (Carley, Chapman, Kirk, & Pawson, 2001; Jupp, 2000; Juviler & Stroschein, 1999; Makuwira, 2007a; Mandell, 1999; Verity, 2007; Wilson, 1997), there is a need for academic literature to share lessons learned from this area.

Analyzing a learning process that builds capacity in organizations may assist researchers to better identify the need for literature on these programs and the imperative for similar learning processes to emerge. This research does not intend to provide an example of a program or a learning process; rather, it aims to convey lessons learned

from experience generated within an area of inquiry that seeks to develop capacity in CBOs. The researcher envisages that the lessons learned by such qualitative research will strengthen other learning processes that can stimulate effective institutional action. Furthermore, it may also encourage CBOs to recognize the need to participate in learning processes that increase their effectiveness, which will naturally impact their ability to contribute to the communities that they serve.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

My interest lies primarily in analyzing a learning process associated with building capacity in institutions (specifically CBOs) through an investigation of the ICBP initiated by a Foundation. The purpose of this study is threefold: (a) to examine the importance of institutional capacity building for individual and community development; (b) to investigate the elements of a process associated with a program and the characteristics of a learning process for building capacity in CBOs; and (3) to analyze the Foundation's approach to synthesizing, systematizing, and sharing learning.

The main research question that will guide the study is: What are the characteristics of the learning process for building capacity in community-based organizations at the ICBP?

The sub-questions that will also play a role in the study are:

- What are the elements of the ICB process associated with a program that seek to build capacity in community-based organizations?
- How does the Foundation synthesize, systematize, and share learning with and among CBOs?
- Why is ICB important for individual and community development?

Capacity Building in Practice: Framing the Research Context

The study will use critical pedagogy and transformative theory as a theoretical framework. The discussion of critical pedagogy will draw on many theorists (Freire, 1970; Kincheloe, 2008; McLaren, 1994; Mezirow, 1990) in the field in order to draw parallels between characteristics of critical pedagogy theory and characteristics of the learning process of ICB. Critical pedagogy theory will also be employed to provide a framework through which the Foundation's approach to synthesizing, systematizing, and sharing learning can be contrasted. The study will also benefit from multiple theorists within transformative theory (Curry-Stevens, 2007; Grabov, 1997; Mezirow, 1997) that can be drawn on to inform the investigation of the elements of the process associated with a program.

Jack Mezirow introduced transformative learning theory in 1978 and it has been an area of research and theory building in the field of adult education ever since. Mezirow's approach to transformative learning has been criticized for being overly rational, critical, and analytical while others have conceptualized transformative learning as an "intuitive, creative, emotional process" (Grabov, 1997, p. 90). Mezirow (1997) recognized that a "defining condition" of being human is that we have an innate desire to understand the meaning of our experience (p. 1). Instead of acting on the basis of uncritical assumptions given to us by others, the education of adults is primarily concerned with enabling learners to act on the basis of their own interpretations, beliefs, and judgments. Facilitating such understanding through the development of autonomous thinking is a major goal of adult education.

Adults have acquired a coherent body of experience—concepts, values, feelings, associations and conditioned responses—that is known as a frame of reference, through which adults read, understand, and define their world. Such frames of references are "structures of assumptions" through which adults understand their experiences; in one sense, transformative learning is the process of effecting change in a frame of reference (Mezirow, 1997, p. 1). In order to do this, the process of transformative learning involves, "transforming frames of reference through critical reflection of assumptions, validating contested beliefs through discourse, taking action on one's reflective insight, and critically assessing it" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 11). Such an approach to education provides a rationale to both select educational practices suitable for transformative learning and a standard to assess sociopolitical conditions that facilitate or impede learning (Mezirow, 1997, p. 11).

In the context of a seminar, a local CBO with the support of the Foundation may facilitate an exploration of a generative theme (social-political themes in the community)—the need to build a bridge, for example, thereby facilitating greater productivity for the villagers in a farming community—that resulted in specific action taken by the women and community (Freire, 1970, p. 105). The encoding and decoding of such a theme enables the students and facilitators to analyze problems together on equal footing and find solutions that contribute to the betterment of their socio-political reality.

To do this, the students and teachers have to engage in discourse, a major characteristic of the learning environment that the Foundation fosters. According to

Mezirow (1997), learning is a social process and discourse is the instrument necessary to validate what and how we understand our experience.

Discourse, which is necessary for making meaning, requires particular conditions. It requires that learners have full information; have opportunities to contribute to various roles of discourse (to share and advance beliefs, explore, explain, assess evidence, and evaluate arguments); to be free from coercion; become critically reflective of assumptions of particular ways of viewing the world; open to multiple perspectives; willing to listen and to accept multiple points of view; and to make decisions that guide actions (Mezirow, 1997, p. 10). This process facilitates autonomous thinking in adult learners, by developing their capacity for critical reflection on their own assumptions and frames of reference.

In transformative learning and the approach taken by the Foundation, participants learn together by analyzing experiences and arrive at a common understanding that holds until new evidence or experience present themselves. Through communicative learning, the women in building a bridge for their community transformed their frames of reference through critical reflection on the assumptions upon which their interpretations, beliefs and habits of mind or points of view were based (Mezirow, 19997, p. 8).

Mezirow (1997) suggests that "transformations in frames of reference take place through critical reflection and transformation of a habit of mind, or they may result from an accretion of transformations in points of view" (p. 8). The process of changing frames of reference involves the identification of assumptions; the ability to recognize frames of reference and paradigms (collective frames of references) and explore alternatives; the

development of the capability to work with others to collectively assess reasons, pose and solve problems, and arrive at decisions to take action (Mezirow, 1997, p. 9).

Investigating Educational Institutional Capacity Building: Theoretical Frameworks for Inquiry

The narrative of the ICBP of the Foundation requires a theoretical framework for inquiry that captures the subtle intricacies of an organic process that is both simple and complex. The elaboration of my theoretical framework will take into consideration the epistemological association between interpretation and understanding (hermeneutics), being (ontology), knowledge, and practice (praxis). My research is approached within a framework that views understanding, interpretation, and practice as inseparable parts of one whole. The subsection under consideration will concentrate on the epistemological and ontological character of the study. This study, which is primarily concerned with social justice and change, will employ a critical pedagogical framework.

Critical theory emerged in Germany in 1923 with the founding of the Frankfurt school. It has created a framework to critique modernity as a historical condition that is bounded by structures, systems, and relationships that promote consumerism, authority, alienation, and power imbalances. As a theory that interrogates obstacles for the advancement of humanity, it promotes ideals of democracy, freedom, agency, and social justice. Critical studies in education emerged in the 1970s with critical pedagogy, which explored the interplay of power and interests in schooling. Paulo Freire's (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is arguably critical pedagogy's founding text.

My analysis of the learning process associated with ICB will be informed by a Freirian approach to critical curricular inquiry as outlined in his seminal work. The

pedagogical principles delineated in the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire could be similar to the characteristics of the learning process for building capacity in CBOs at the ICBP. These same principles might also be used as a framework in which to understand how the Foundation synthesizes, systematizes, and shares learning with and among CBOs. I hope to now explore these principles with the hope of relating them to findings in Chapter 4.

Freire (1970) delineates four principles that could potentially characterize the learning process of ICB; these include: problem-posing education, praxis, dialogics, and achieving full humanity. Problem-posing education overcomes the teacher–student contradiction in which the teacher is the one who holds the knowledge and the student receives it—known as banking education. Such an approach assumes that education should involve listening, critical thinking, dialogues, and action for the purpose of liberation. Praxis is an inherent part of problem-posing education and is understood as participating in a continual process of reflecting and acting in the world in order to transform it. In one sense, it is the process or means through which the oppressed achieve full liberation. Trust in each person's ability to engage in true reflection, which in turn leads to action, is a necessary prerequisite for sustained change (Freire, 1970, p. 66).

Dialogics is the instrument through which praxis and problem-posing education are mobilized. In this sense, individuals engage in dialogical action for the purpose of revealing the truth through interacting with others and the world (Freire, 1970, p. 69). Dialogical actions are different than non-dialogical actions, which deny dialogue by the many, manipulate and distort communication for the benefit of the few, and reproduce power and privilege. Dialogics humanizes all people by enabling them to unveil and read

reality, interact with it, and transform it. In this way, Freire explains that they discover themselves as its "permanent re-creators" (1970, p. 69).

The aim of this pedagogy requires that each person achieve his or her full humanity. Regaining their humanity takes place through the actualization of the principles outlined by Freire for a pedagogy that is forged with and not for the oppressed in their struggle for liberation (1970, p. 48). None of this will be achieved without profound love for the world and for people, humility before others' reading and understanding of the world, faith in humankind and their power to make and remake it (Freire, 1970, p. 90). These principles as well as others put forth by Freire will provide the framework through which the learning process of ICB is analyzed.

Although there are many interpretations of critical pedagogy, this study will draw on many influential authors (including Freire, 1970; Kincheloe, 2008; McLaren, 1994; Wink, 2010) within the field whose work may or may not be consistent with the Foundation's theoretical framework. Completion of the study will indicate whether such a framework is suitable to study the learning process associated with ICB or not.

This section will aim to explore possible meanings attached to critical pedagogy. McLaren (1994) suggests that although critical pedagogy does not constitute a homogeneous set of ideas, critical pedagogues are largely united in their efforts to promote social justice, equality, and empowerment in a world that is characterized by the opposite.

Beyond exploring an approach to critical pedagogy, this study, which involves adults, might also consider critical adult education as a field to draw upon. Critical pedagogy informs and complements critical adult education (Grace, 2006, p. 133).

Critical adult education is concerned with advancing social and cultural forms of adult education for life, learning and work (Collins, 1991; Grace, 2006. Grace (2006) argues that critical adult education "emphasizes collective action and reflection in learning processes and community building. It frames dialogue, communication, conflict, and change as necessary and contributive to the mediation of life, learning, and work in a change culture of crisis and challenge" (p. 133).

In this way, adult education views knowledge as socially and culturally constructed. An approach to knowledge, which is bombarded by contemporary forces like neo-liberalism, global corporatism, and the melding of the social and economic must consider and develop a critique, which seeks to include and exclude diverse fields of study (Grace, 2006). Dialogue and deliberation are a critical part of any adult educational effort that seeks to interrogate social exclusion and power imbalances while paying attention to building communities that accommodate and respect difference.

The nature of critical pedagogy rejects the inclination to define and capture the essence of a thing (Kincheloe, 2008). It is often argued that critical pedagogy defined is to name, to reflect critically, and to act (Wink, 2010, p. 45). In this regard, critical theory is understood as a framework to see deeply what is below the surface—to think, critique, or analyze (Wink, 2010, p. 45). The practice of exploring what is beneath the surface enables questions of power, privilege, and oppression that were once obscured to get to a place of inquiry. Inquiry is done in light of the historical, social, cultural, and political context within which this privilege, oppression. and power emerge (Wink, 2010).

McNiff and Whitehead (2000) elaborate further on the theme by distinguishing between critical theory and critical thinking; they say, "critical thinking is not necessarily

critical theory, but critical thinking is at the heart of critical theory" (p. 178). Quite accurately, critical theory extends beyond just thinking critically but even thinking critically when taken to excess can become superfluous. McNiff and Whitehead go on to explain the theory quite simply:

> Critical theory is the formal term given to a system of thinking that begins by understanding that nothing in human relations is given. Everything people do and say is conditioned by other influences, both from the external social world and also from the inner mental world. Personal-social situations are not given; they are created by people in situations. (p.178)

Joe Kincheloe (2008) introduces the central characteristics of critical pedagogy, which is a social and educational vision of equality and justice that is based on the belief that education is a political act; dedicated to the alleviation of human suffering and oppression; concerned with the delicate balance of fostering social change while cultivating the intellect; focused on the empowerment of the marginalized and oppressed; upholds the need to understand context and complexity; and resistant of the dominant power and positivism as an epistemology (pp. 40-43).

Epistemological and Ontological Underpinnings

Critical theory rejects the epistemological position of positivism, which views knowledge as a fixed and absolute entity that is scientifically verifiable. Positivism views reality as one true and objective entity. As such, it is the role of educators to act as depositories of knowledge who transmit this same knowledge to their students. Instead, critical theorists embrace the socially and culturally constructed nature of knowledge (Kincheloe, 2008; Wink, 2010). Critical theorists challenge this position of positivism

and try to dig deeper. As McLaren (1989) states, “Critical pedagogy asks how and why knowledge gets constructed the way it does, and how and why some constructions of reality are legitimated and celebrated by the dominant culture while others clearly are not” (p. 169). This approach to knowledge enables us to overcome the closed-mindedness perpetuated by objectivism and the arbitrariness upheld by relativism that was propagated by the “Cartesian Anxiety” that arose out of Western thought and was concerned with the foundations of knowledge (Bernstein, 1983).

Philosophers have struggled to determine whether there is an immutable foundation on which knowledge rests or whether such a basis is unlikely. With no foreseeable answer in sight, humanity chose two opposing views: objectivism, which leads to rigidity, and relativism, which leads to skepticism. In order to understand the nature of this dichotomy and consider ways to rid ourselves of such limitations placed on our individual and collective acquisition of knowledge, Bernstein (1983) puts forth the notion of “the Dialogical Community” as a helpful construct that assists us to rise above the Cartesian dilemma. It helps us overcome the Cartesian Anxiety by providing a different way of thinking and understanding our being in the world as dialogical beings constantly engaged in conversation, hermeneutics, and praxis. Dialogical communities provide an environment where a new conversation emerges; free from the dichotomy of objectivism and relativism that so often paralyzes progress.

Bernstein (1983) puts forward a few elements of a conversation he sees emerging that are applicable to the theoretical framework advanced in the present inquiry as follows: (a) there are no universal frameworks for knowing; however, progress is possible; (b) knowledge is obtained through a process that associates hermeneutics and

praxis, that is, interpretation and action; (c) understanding is a form of practical reasoning and practical knowledge; (d) the investigation of reality and discovery of new knowledge comes from a community in discourse; and (e) as a community engages in dialogue, a tradition emerges over time (Bernstein, 1983). The theoretical framework for the present inquiry will be guided by these five elements put forth by Bernstein.

The ontological underpinnings of this study are based heavily on Richard Bernstein's theory of knowledge. Bernstein (1983) explains that "the process of understanding can never (ontologically) achieve finality" which means that it is always "open and anticipatory" (p. 7). In addition, "meaning is always coming into being through the 'happening' of understanding" (p. 7). In one sense, my approach to this research is undertaken in a spirit of "what we understand about the world shapes who we are and what we do, just as being and doing shape our understanding" (FUNDAEC, 2010, p. 97). In a similar way, this study will aim to capture the Foundation's current experience but will assume that this experience and the understanding of that experience will change with time. Therefore, this research is undertaken in a spirit of collaboration—the Foundation and myself as partners in an ongoing process of learning.

Outlining the Thesis

Chapter 2 contextualizes this study through a review of the literature focusing on three concepts: the relationship between individual, community, and institutional capacity building; the need for training and ongoing support of institutions; and three intersecting issues—the centrality of knowledge in capacity building, the empowerment of women and youth, and the need to unpack relationships of power while simultaneously transforming women and youth into empowered citizens. These three concepts are

explored in the context of a critical theory framework.

Chapter 3 outlines why and how I came to choose a qualitative research design, to study the process of the ICBP through adult education *for* community development. The description of the research process, which is based on learning from action, includes the articulation of my research praxis of collaboration and reciprocal learning, which will be complemented by the qualities and attitudes that I hope to develop as a researcher of respect, responsibility, reciprocity, and relational accountability. I will also outline my conceptual framework for action and analysis while conveying my research paradigm and methodology.

Chapter 4 will give context to the site, participants, and program through a narrative. It elaborates three generative themes that emerged out of the interviews: the importance of institutional capacity building; elements of a methodology for building capacity in CBOs, characteristics of a process of capacity building with CBOs; and the Foundation's approach to synthesizing and sharing learning.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the findings that emerged following the analysis of the generative themes; theoretical and practical implications for institutional capacity building; personal reflections on the research process; and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this Chapter is threefold: first, to examine the nexus between capacity building of individuals, institutions, and communities; second, to illustrate the need for learning processes that enhance the capabilities of institutions; third, to consider three themes related to the work of the Foundation, ICBP—the identification of special populations, the centrality of knowledge in capacity building, and the re-examination of power as it relates to ICB.

Literature on Education for Institutional Capacity Building Through Concepts and Contexts

Scholars and educators have begun to inquire into the nature of the learning process needed to build capacity in the institutions that serve individuals and communities as a result of a quarter-century of experience in the field of community-capacity building. As mentioned in the previous Chapter, learning processes that stimulate ICB are largely overlooked within educational theory and practice (Chapman & Kirk, 2001). Nevertheless, there is consensus among organizations about the need to provide a dynamic field of inquiry, to forge new connections and question existing ones within educational contexts that seek to build capacity in institutions.

Under the purview of this study, the aim of education is directed towards social change. In this thesis, I conceptualize education as the intellectual, moral, and spiritual growth of the individual and the development of their capacity to contribute to the transformation of society. I advance the view that capacity development is the integration of useful information, the understanding of particular concepts, the acquisition of a set of interrelated skills and the development of certain attitudes, habits, and spiritual qualities.

A learning process that is concerned with the development of capabilities increases institutional capacity to contribute to the progress of individuals and communities.

In the first three subsections of this Chapter, I use the literature to examine my first research question: Why is institutional capacity building important for individual and community development? By arguing that individual, community, and institutional capacity building are inseparable, I show why institutional capacity building is important for individual and communal development.

Nexus Between Capacity Building of Individuals, Institutions, and Communities

The conceptual model in which the Foundation operates includes a learning process that strives to develop capacity within three protagonists: the individual, institutions, and community. Increased capacity of individuals and communities is a natural consequence of efforts to build capacity in institutions. The nexus of these three participants exposes the nature of the fundamental relationships underlying society. The relationship between the three protagonists is neither conflictual nor competitive, but is characterized by reciprocity, self-sacrifice, and harmony. In order to establish these types of relationships, none of the three protagonists must take on an enlarged importance, but each must view itself as part of the whole. The task of building an advancing society requires a reexamination of the relationship between the individual, community and institutions (The Foundation, 2011a).

A dictionary definition of "capacity" and "building" will provide insight into the term capacity building:

- Capacity: "the ability or power to do or understand something" and the "power of containing, receiving, experiencing or producing" (Oxford Dictionary, p. 147).

- Building: “the creation or development of something over a period of time” or “to construct by putting parts or materials together”… “to gradually establish itself” (as cited in Cooper, Verity, & Bull, 2005, p. 2)

This conjunction of terms captures “capacity building” as a generative and productive process whose aim is the emergence of something new. Capacity building is linked to a process of learning that evolves over time. Therefore, the Foundation has set in motion a learning process that seeks to build capacity in institutions at the level of the community.

Origins, Definitions, Communities: Social Context of Capacity Building

The community is the context in which the individual and institutions act (Galbraith, 1990, p. 8). There is an abundance of literature concerning meanings of community capacity but very few on the subject of capacity building in practice (Chaskin, 2001, p. 292). Notwithstanding the voluminous amount of literature that present definitions—community capacity building is often referred to as “contested,” “slippery,” “shifting,” “elusive,” “muddled,” and “ill defined” (Chapman & Kirk, 2001, pp. 7-8; Frankish, 2003). On the other hand, it has been described as “new,” “innovative,” “significant,” “exciting,” and “empowering” (Sinclair, 2000). Mitchell and Macfie (2003) suggest that, “community capacity building’ is not a clear concept with an agreed meaning” (p. 5).

The earliest references to community capacity building (CCB) date back to the early 1990s and were linked to the work of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (UNDP, 1991). CCB has developed in a variety of contexts—from building the strengths and capabilities of organizations that work with communities to others that

focus on building capacity within the community itself (Craig, 2007, p. 335). It's ubiquitous in urban policy, regeneration, and social development (Craig, 2007, p. 335). Nevertheless, it is a value-laden term that means different things to different people.

My thesis's exploration of CCB will be carried out within the field of social development. CCB promotes preconditions for "community development in the long term" (Chapman & Kirk, 2001, p. iv). According to Simon (1999), Thomas (2000), Peet and Hartwick (2009), and Chambers (1997), social development emphasizes well-being for all. David Simon (1999) argues that development should enhance the quality of life for the individual, institutions, and community in an empowering and sustainable way. Social development efforts are often associated with mechanisms of control in a community. But it is more appropriate to see development "as a process of change rather than a specified level of achievement" (Yamamori, Myers, Bryant, Bediako, & Reed, 1996, p. 124). Within the context of social development, a working concept of CCB materializes.

Some definitions of CCB concentrate on the participation of the individual in shared decision-making, social action, community planning, and building relationships (Gittell, Newman, & Ortega 1995; Goodman, Speers, Mcleroy, Fawcett & Kegler, 1998). Others emphasize community efforts to increase commitment, skills, problem solving, and long-term planning that is supported and guided by an institution or organization (Goodman et al., 1998). Other working definitions use language laden with generalizations while employing catch phrases like community competence, empowerment, and "the community's ability to pursue its chosen purposes and course of action" (Fawcett et al., 1995, p. 68). Precise and clear language used to describe CCB

efforts lead to clarity of thought and action while also fostering greater opportunities to accurately measure the effectiveness of such programs.

In Canada, the process of CCB is often described as establishing "resilient" communities (Canadian Centre for Community Enterprise [CCCE], 2000). CCB is understood as "any activities, which the community undertakes (on its own or with the help of others) to improve or build its own collective commitment, resources and skills" (Bruce, 2005, p.7). The Appalachian Regional Commission (2004) elaborates further:

> Community capacity building not only entails imagining how things might be, but realizing what it takes to get there and then translating plans into action. It involves challenges to the status quo, and in some cases, conflict with the established modes of behaviour and governance. (p.7)

Notwithstanding the diversity of definitions within the field and contestations against CCP, there are definite similarities. Chaskin (2001) identifies four commonalities that exist within the literature on CCB including: (a) the existence of financial and human resources, ranging from individual skills to organizational capital; (b) networks of relationships; (c) leadership; and (d) support from a mechanism or process that enhances participation of community members in collective action and problem solving (pp. 292-293).

Even though different people can use community capacity to describe different activities, it is nevertheless a useful construct for guiding and understanding efforts to create social change in a community (Chaskin, 2001, p. 293). At a basic level it is valuable to conceptualize community as a context for individual and institutional action (Galbraith, 1990, p. 8). Much of the literature links community and individual capacity

building with structural or organizational change (Herriot, 1995). However, very little will change without a process of learning associated with building the capacity of the individual, institution, or community. Such a learning process explores how building the capacity of one of these protagonists can further strengthen the capacity of the others.

In *Walking the Straight Path*, one of the educational materials developed by the Foundation (2002), there is a story that illustrates the relationship of the individual and the community. At the beginning of the story, there is small statement: "No man is an island is a phrase frequently quoted the world over. Alone, none of us can get very far. Community life is an essential part of our existence." The story continues:

> In a community that enjoyed much warmth and unity, one individual became discouraged and kept away from others. The local council asked a friend to help him overcome his feelings of estrangement. Soon the friend invited him to his house for dinner and, in a most natural way, showered him with kindness. It was a chilly night, and following dinner the two sat in front of the fire sipping tea and watching the flames.
>
> After a few minutes, the host had an idea. He picked up a brightly burning piece of wood with a pair of tongs and moved it to a corner of the fireplace. He sat back in silence while his guest kept watching. Alone, the ember began to lose its fire until there was a last glow and then coldness and death. Before the evening was over, he moved the old dead wood to the middle of the fire where it became a glowing ember once again.
>
> Not a word was said all evening about the whole matter. But when the guest was almost out the door, he turned around and said, "Thank you for the

> fiery lesson." At the next community gathering, everyone was happy to see a friend who had been sorely missed. (The Foundation, 2002, p. 29)

The Individual—Contextualized through "Ubuntu"

Individual and community capacity are closely linked—the one reinforces the other. As the individual acts, the capacity of the community increases. As community solidarity and harmony strengthen, the individual advances. Individual capacity building can be understood as the enhancement of capabilities—skills, habits, attitudes, qualities, and concepts for community development. Individual capacity building should enable "local people to move from the status of objects manipulated by external forces and victims of social processes, to the status of subjects and active agents of change" (Alana Albee Consultants, 1995, p.6).

According to the Alana Albee Consultants (1995), the individual's participation in her or his own development rarely takes place spontaneously but involves "social preparation" and is often facilitated by community-based organizations. Building the capacity of individuals is described as a process of supporting people to: (a) gather information about their resources and circumstances; (b) analyze their situation while learning to read their own reality; (c) plan and prioritize actions that they wish to carry out; (d) collaborate with a group or organization; and (e) work out the means and instruments that lead to the implementation of these actions (Chapman & Kirk, 2001). Furthermore, CCB is often conceptualized as building individual capacity, it "means developing the capacity and skills of the members of a community in such a way that they are better able to identify, and help meet their needs, and to participate more fully in society" (Charity Commission, 2000, p. 2).

Much of the literature tends to disregard the importance of ordinary community members as actors in the community building process. Instead, it focuses on formal organizations, community programs, and dynamic leaders (Sinclair, 2002, p. 316). Strategies that pay attention to building capacity in organizations or the community exclusively while ignoring the individual will not be sustained. Likewise, community-building efforts will prove fragile if individuals ignore efforts taken by organizations.

The "individual" as an indispensable actor in any community building process is unlike the "hero" or "leader" that many organizations and communities value. Within the nexus of the community, institution, and individual, the "individual" refers to every single person in the community who has a desire to contribute—whether it be a mother, father, daughter, son, or elder. Reliance on a superhuman individual leader reflects a culture of individualism highly propagated in western capitalist culture. Furthermore, any initiative that is dependent on one person will cease without them.

Diametrically opposite to this ideology of individualism is the African humanist philosophy of Ubuntu, translated by the Liberian peace activist Leymah Gbowee to mean: "I am what I am because of who we all are" (Gbowee, 2010, p.2). Whereas an individualistic society values independence and self-reliance, many cultures embrace more collectivist values, essentially regarding the community as more important than the individual. After all, communities are defined by the relationships that are formed and maintained among their members (Sinclair, 2002, p. 316). With the help of the institutions and community, the individual is an instrument of limitless potential.

The Missing Link—Institutional and Organizational Capacity

Individuals and institutions have to abandon the tendency to seek separate ends and instead must work towards a common purpose. Literature in the field of community building suggests that institutions are central to strengthening community and individual capacity (Sinclair, 2000). Mandell (1999) recognizes that communities rely on institutional structures to address and respond to local problems. She describes these structures as "public, private and not-for-profit organizations and/or individuals in an active, organized collaboration to accomplish some agreed upon purpose or purposes" (p. 44). Furthermore, such institutions within a community provide some form of legitimate decision-making authority (Juviler & Stroschein, 1999, p. 436).

Giddens (1979) puts forth a structuration framework, which suggests that community members construct a community's institutional boundaries. Basically, thought creates actions and those actions create structures. When two or more people encounter each other, they create a structure and pattern their interactions on that mutually determined structure. According to Giddens, "social structure" includes the "patterning of interaction" (between actors and groups) and the "continuity of interaction in time" (p. 62). Simply put, "structuration" is a theory in which "change" in a community is a product that results from the interaction of individual agency and structures.

Within CCB there are references to six dimensions, domains, or sites of action: (a) community domain; (b) institutional domain; (c) linking domain; (d) knowledge domains; (e) skills and abilities domains; and (f) resource transfer domain (Laverack, 2003). Within the institutional domain, strategies include policy support for community

capacity building, resource allocation, participatory social planning and decision-making, and financial and human resources development (Verity, 2007). Organizations and/or community workers guide strategies of this sort. Capacity building rarely takes place without some form of facilitation (Chapman & Kirk, 2001).

There are multiple institutions that operate in a local community that come from both the public and private sector, including—voluntary sector organizations, social economy organizations, community regeneration organizations, government funded organizations, and community-based organizations (Chapman & Kirk, 2001). Carley et al. (2001) say that the strongest community-based organizations are those which have been in operation for a long time and have established strong ties with the local community. Success also depends on organizational aims being motivated by social purpose rather than by profit (Chapman & Kirk, 2001).

Chaskin (2001) provides a framework for mapping relations and components of community capacity building. It consists of a relational model and is comprised of multiple dimensions: (a) its fundamental characteristics; (b) the levels of social agency: individual, organizational, and networks that work within a community to enhance capacity; (c) the functions of these three levels; (d) strategies that promote capacity building; (e) context or influence that support or inhibit capacity building; and (f) community level outcomes (p. 295).

This model suggests that community capacity is built as a result of particular interventions through the operation of an organization's multiple functions. Organizations often provide the means through which communities can act and speak collectively. They

do this through informing, organizing and mobilizing residents towards collective action for a particular outcome (Sinclair, 2002).

A Learning Process for Institutional Capacity Building: Pedagogy, Practice, and Possibilities

As I mentioned in the first Chapter, I do not intend to study an educational program, but instead will examine the characteristics of a process of learning that tries to build capacity in institutions. In this next section, I survey literature that investigates the requisite characteristics for capacity building in community organizations. In this way, I will use current literature to explore my second research question: What are the characteristics of the learning process for building capacity in CBOs?

The learning process associated with the ICBP created by the Foundation appears to focus on facilitating, training, and supporting CBOs to contribute to the sustainable development of their communities. In general, organizational structures and educational processes that channel initiative also support individual and community capacity building. Effective capacity building efforts are often carried out in the context of a strong learning process that drives them forward. In this way, capacity building is concerned with education *for* the community, education *in* the community and education *of* the community (Brookfield, 1983, p. 84).

Chapman and Kirk (2001) argue that one of the gaps in knowledge within CCB literature includes the need for greater analysis and evaluation of the educational programs and training needs of individuals working within community-based organizations (p. 43). Furthermore, the majority of organizations do not offer their employees or volunteers any training (Chapman et al., 2001). The Social Exclusion Unit

(1999) has shown that many practitioners feel that they do not get enough high-quality training. They also contend that there is very little in the way of guidance and training on how to build the capacity of people within the community. Wilson (1997) argues that higher education will need to pay a greater role in building educational and training initiatives for CBOs. The training of individuals working with institutions is a clear way in which CCB efforts could advance and contribute to community solidarity and prosperity.

On the other hand, Jupp (2000) explains that "training is often helpful, but it is not sufficient in its own right" (p. 44). If training is to be effective, it is to be complemented by ongoing support and accompanying in the field of action. Nevertheless, institutional educational programs are a vital part of any CCB initiative. Henderson and Mayo (1998) argue that training is often introduced too late. Training and skills development should be introduced before any CCB effort commences and should respond to weaknesses (e.g., management of financial and human resources, facilitating community participation, or collective-decision making, etc.) present in particular organizations.

The identification and analysis of training needs for CBOs is a priority (Chapman & Kirk, 2001). The literature suggests that institutions require training in organizational development, group working, and clarifying roles and responsibilities within organizations, financial and human resource development, strategies to execute effective meetings, identifying a working plan of action, promoting equal opportunities by mobilizing diversity, creating an organizational culture, fostering community participation, accessing knowledge about what works, the development of skills, (e.g., interpersonal skills, conflict management, leadership styles, technological skills, problem

solving, team building, listening and learning from others) attitudes, qualities, and habits (Chapman & Kirk, 2011; Purdue, Razzaque, Hambleton, & Stewart with Huxham &Vangen, 2000).

Furthermore, training must include organizations' ability to network with other likeminded community groups and organizations. This often includes the creation of a forum in which organizations can share skills, experiences, learning, and ideas as well as benefit from an environment of mutual support. Such forums provide a space in which a language of CCB can emerge (Verity, 2007).

Chapman and Kirk (2001) say that "training is one way to counter narrow professional attitudes and to encourage professionals to engage with issues in a more holistic manner" (p. 31). Institutional educational programs "enable people to express and analyze the realities of their lives and conditions, plan what action to take and monitor and evaluate results" (Scottish Executive, 2000, p. 93). If training is to be effective, it will need to be an ongoing part of all organizational action. Furthermore, training reinforces the desire to learn. The evolution of institutional capacity will ensure that learning is organized and becomes a systematic activity.

The Foundation's (2011a) institutional educational program strengthens critical institutional capabilities that enable organizations to rise to a higher stage of development (p. 9). The framework offered by the Foundation for the training of CBOs consists of the development of seven capabilities: "constructing a conceptual framework; reading society and forming a vision; translating a vision into a program; implementing a program in a learning mode; raising up and deploying human resources; developing and managing financial resources; and forming and maintaining relationships with

government and civil society" (The Foundation, 2011a, para.3). In Chapter 4, I will look further at characteristics of a learning process for capacity building in institutions.

Centrality of Knowledge and the Empowerment of Special Populations

Political, social, and religious institutions have created structures and systems that have systematically perpetuated oppression among certain populations. Institutions have used power *over* others to promote particular interests while silencing others. The process of building social harmony requires that social systems and structures that perpetuate oppression and power imbalances give way to new systems and structures that release the power latent within populations to contribute to the betterment of society. Power is to be understood mainly in the context of the em*power*ment of others.

The next two sections examine knowledge, power, and empowerment as it relates to capacity building and the learning process of ICB in order understand the third and fourth research questions: What are the elements of the ICB program process that seek to build capacity in CBOs? How does the Foundation synthesize, systematize, and share learning with and among CBOs? The elements of the ICB program process and the learning process require an exploration of these themes before an adequate examination of these questions can occur in Chapter 4.

Established in 1990, the Foundation specifically decided to focus on two marginalized populations—women and youth. Their program seems to work with these populations towards a common cause – freedom from oppression. Overcoming oppression is not seen as a struggle against others but a struggle to unlock the potential that exists within marginalized populations to contribute to the betterment of society. A

passage from The Lab, the Temple and the Market (Arbab, 2000) articulates this idea well:

> For me, what was most striking about my new community was not material poverty *per se* but the wealth of talent that went uncultivated, together with the dreams of noble futures that went unfulfilled, as injustice systematically blocked the development of potentialities. (p. 154)

An obstacle faced in this regard is the duality of being that exists within the oppressed. Freire (1970) explains that although the oppressed desire liberation, they also fear it (p. 48). This duality of being is a result of the internalization of the oppressor's consciousness. The choice lies in them being themselves or being divided

> between ejecting the oppressor within or not ejecting them; between human solidarity or alienation; between following prescriptions or having choices; between being spectators or actors; between acting or having the illusion of acting through the action of the oppressors; between speaking or being silent, castrated in their power to create and re-create, in their power to transform the world. (Freire, 1970, p. 48)

Oppression is present when knowledge and empowerment are absent. Any discussion on capacity building must consider the nexus between power, oppression, and knowledge that exists within marginalized populations. Power can be understood as the *capacity to act* within a social context. The empowerment of a population, which is a result of their own capacity to act and transform the world, is difficult without knowledge. Understanding oppression in terms of depriving human beings of the right to

have access to knowledge helps us recognize that even with notable advances with the establishment of human rights, oppression continues (FUNDAEC, 2010).

Human capacity advances through the acquisition of knowledge. Knowledge empowers the oppressors to engage in praxis, which transforms their own reality and the world. Special populations construct knowledge as means of overcoming oppression and achieving liberation (Freire, 1970). The paradigm in which the Foundation operates places the generation and application of knowledge at the core of an ongoing process of social and economic development. As such, their efforts in the field of social action seek to build capacity in populations whereby larger numbers of individuals can have access to knowledge and participate in its generation and application towards the building of a materially and spiritually prosperous civilization (The Foundation, 2011a). The expansion of human capacity through the generation, application, and diffusion of knowledge is now becoming the stimulus for the empowerment of populations.

The process of the generation, application, and diffusion of knowledge is central to the Foundation's efforts to contribute to social transformation. It calls for an increase in the levels of capacity among the masses of humanity to be empowered to act and contribute their talents and capacities to the advancement of society (The Foundation, 2011a). It also requires that all people, whether marginalized or not, have access to knowledge.

Access to knowledge does not simply mean having access to information and technology but also requires the opportunity to generate and apply knowledge to the life of the individual, institutions and community (FUNDAEC, 2010). This stands in sharp contrast to a materialistically driven society that increasingly regards knowledge as a

commodity. In no way does the Foundation believe that knowledge should be ruled by the demands of economic growth. Rather, it should be guided by a desire to contribute to the material and intellectual needs of a community. This conception of knowledge alters ways in which social structures and processes are crafted. Systematic learning will necessarily be at the heart of all methods and lines of action if they are to remain consistent and sustained over the long term.

Currently, a handful of people are participating in scientific endeavours but if the construction of knowledge were to become central to all development efforts, it would demand that the masses of humanity be permitted and assisted to contribute to the construction of scientific knowledge. Building a bridge for a village is one such example of generating and applying scientific knowledge for the betterment of the community. Success of any development effort should be measured by the growing capacity of a community to make and implement decisions about its spiritual, intellectual and material well-being.

Within any system of knowledge, there exists the operation of power and privilege that perpetuate unjust and inequitable conditions. The Foundation (2011a) avoids this by partnering with CBOs as co-constructors of knowledge, thereby ensuring that knowledge systems reflect the social reality in which they are situated. This does not imply that knowledge systems—as sets of assumption, narratives, and truth-claims about social reality—are just to be accepted. Rather, they have to be interrogated and unpacked as knowledge is created and re-created in relation to the goal of advancing collective prosperity. Society will always have to question knowledge systems by adopting a

reflective and systematic approach to learning whereby the construction of knowledge can be shielded against the corrupting influence of power.

At the heart of any capacity building process is the need for organizations and communities to make certain decisions based on a reading of their own reality. More specifically, "social action must be informed by a correct reading of social reality; the more accurate the reading, the higher the possibility of success" (FUNDAEC, 2010, p. 98). An organization's reading of social reality might include forming an understanding of the nature and state of society, its challenges, the resources available to it, the institutions operating in it, the forces influencing it, and the capacities of the people. In order to understand how an individual or institution's consciousness of social reality develops, it is helpful to consider a profound question, "how do we know that our perception of reality corresponds to reality itself?" (FUNDAEC, 2010, p. 98).

There is not an exact correspondence between thought and reality itself. One way to understand reality is through the use of theories. According to Bohm (1995), "theories are to be regarded primarily as ways of looking at the world as a whole (i.e. world views) rather than 'as absolutely true knowledge of how things are'" while " all theories are insights which are neither true nor false but, rather, clear in certain domains, and unclear when extended beyond these domains" (p. 22). Further, theories are not to be understood as falsified at a particular point but are "continually developing new forms of insight, which are clear up to a point and then tend to become unclear" (Bohm, 1995, p. 23). The understanding that theory is a series of insights into reality and not absolute knowledge of how things are marks a very important element in an approach to learning that characterize individuals, institutions and communities that co-construct knowledge.

Choices are based on our knowledge of reality at a particular time. Individuals, institutions and communities are continually making choices and changing them as their understanding of reality advances over time. Galbraith (1990) suggests that an organization and a community's first choice is a decision that a need exists (p. 91). Additional choices are made about educational opportunities: who should the organization serve? Should they collaborate with diverse populations such as women, minorities, or the disadvantaged? Choices are made based on ethical considerations that give due attention collective decision-making.

According to their website, the Foundation (2011a) identifies individuals who want to be of service to their communities, invites them to participate in an institutional capacity building program, and supports them while they set up the CBO in their hometown. By helping individuals indigenous to the community establish their own CBOs *for* and *with* the community, the ongoing capacity building process begins from inside a population, thereby avoiding the inside-outside dichotomy that plagues the development discourse.

Depending on the circumstances, the CBO receives training from the Foundation to implement either the EAP or JYEP. The JYEP aims to release the potential of youth between the ages of 12 and 15 to contribute to the social and economic development of their communities (The Foundation, 2011a). This is facilitated through educational programs that are concerned with developing English language skills and the power of expression; exploring mathematical concepts and social issues; investigating physical, social, and spiritual reality in a scientific manner; and the construction of a moral structure in the mind of a young person. While most of society chooses to relegate the

contributions of junior youth to the fringes of social action, the Foundation (2011a) views this population as one that merits attention and focus so that it can resume its rightful place at the heart of community building activities. The Foundation (2011a) has worked with 3,000 rural women in the EAP and 8,000 junior youth in the JYEP.

Institutional Capacity Building: A Question of Power

Power and its operation are naturally at the heart of any discussion related to capacity building. Capacity building efforts can unintentionally uphold traditional power structures (Verity, 2007). In addition, CCB is criticized for obscuring power imbalances of the "builders," those with power or capacity and their respective "beneficiaries" who are powerless (Makuwira, 2007a, p. 129). Oftentimes, those who sing the praises of CCB avoid important questions: "What is capacity? Who needs capacity? Capacity to do what? Whose interest(s) is/are served when people's capacities are built? Who determines the process and with what effects? Who evaluates and ascertains that capacity has been achieved?" (Makuwira, 2007b, p. 129).

Materialistic frameworks that guide dominant visions of human progress have failed to bring "an acceptable degree of well-being to the majority of the world's peoples" (FUNDAEC, 2010, p. 65). Such materialistic notions of social reality abound within prevailing discourses on power. This limited view of power requires that social organizations transcend the view that society is simply a site for the contestation of power. If it is possible to overcome contested models of social organization, new sources of power that are both material and spiritual will have to be considered. Which begs the question: how do institutions tap into different sources of power that contribute to the advancement of society?

My aim is to create an alternative analysis of power that includes an expanded conception of power at the level of both theory and practice. It may be helpful to view the operation of power *as* capacity. In general, the concept of power is akin to the concept of capacity. Jackson et al. (1999) suggest that we should view community capacity *as* power to solve problems as well as the concrete knowledge and skills that enable them to effectively address local challenges and areas of concern. Oftentimes conceptions of power focus on the tendency to use the power or capacity to advance self-interest, compete, dominate, exploit, manipulate, and influence. Capacity or power can also be used to cooperate, collaborate, work creatively, consult, empower, unify, and transform. The latter operation of power and capacity demand our consideration.

Institutions have come to be viewed by society at large as instruments of oppression (Verity, 2007). There are, however, countless examples of institutions that foster human solidarity and progress. If capacity building efforts are to succeed, institutions need to undergo a process of maturation in which they develop their ability to guide and coordinate the latent powers released by individuals and communities. The ICBP works with institutions from the community to utilize power—to exert agency, through volition and action to realize collective goals (The Foundation, 2011a). In this sense, institutions are to avoid the tendency to restrict human freedom but instead become an instrument that channels the latent power that exists within individuals and communities towards social organization that fosters collective aims.

Conventional analyses of institutional power focus on material sources of power. These sources of power include financial resources, physical strength, privilege, social status, education, access to specialized knowledge and technology, and access to media

outlets. Spiritual sources of power are no less legitimate. They include the powers of justice and equity, the powers of love and unity, the powers of beauty and excellence, the powers of cooperation and reciprocity, and the powers of altruism and self-sacrifice.

Community capacity building is often undertaken in response to a deficit—powerlessness (Makuwira, 2007a, p. 9). As Makuwira (2007a) explains, community capacity building is never "power neutral" and it includes "a struggle and a process of gaining power, rather than of being 'given' power" (p. 7). Educational development initiatives that are based on materialist sources of power will view capacity building as "giving" power to marginalized populations whereas initiatives that are concerned with both sources of power will conceptualize their work as releasing power *within* a population, *by* a population and *for* a population.

Releasing powers within the individual and community require participation in collective decision-making, sustainability, and participation in social action—the antithesis of powerlessness (Makuwira, 2007a, p. 7). The participation of the individual in social action is the greatest source of power for both institutions and community. This is challenging for many populations since capacity building normally begins as a result of powerlessness, weakness, hopelessness, acquiescence, marginalization, oppression, domination, dehumanization, dependency, passivity, exploitation, and a culture of silence (Ajulu, 2000). Overcoming this reality requires hope in the powers latent within every individual and community.

A word of caution is needed. In an attempt to describe an evolving analysis of power, I am in no way suggesting that as individuals and communities we are absolved from continually interrogating "our privilege as well as our powerlessness" (Ng, 2003, p.

216). An evolving conception of power requires the continual development of critical thinking skills that examine power and its operation in society. In addition, it demands an understanding of how power works and its tendency to foster inequality and oppression (Curry-Stevens, 2007, p. 41).

Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have tried to identify key terms, locate the literature through a thematic review, critically evaluate and select relevant literature, and identify the absence of literature focused on educational institutional capacity programs, thereby justifying the need for such a study (Creswell, 2011, p. 90). The Chapter conveyed three complementary aims: the exploration of the nexus between institutional, community-based, and individual capacity building; the justification of the need to study a learning process associated with capacity building for institutions; and the examination of themes related to the elements of the ICB program process and learning process, including the release of power by empowered individuals for the betterment of society, the centrality of knowledge in capacity building processes, and the identification of special populations as reservoirs of unlimited potential.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

In this Chapter, I will describe the methodology I have chosen for my research. In the first Chapter, my theoretical framework for inquiry conveyed both the ontological and epistemological foundations of my research paradigm. In this Chapter, I will share elements of my axiology or the philosophical nature of values that have influenced my research, my identity as researcher in relation to the Foundation, and my research methodology. I will also outline why and how I came to choose a narrative case study design to examine the process of the ICBP.

Towards a Research Praxis of Collaboration: Respect, Responsibility, Reciprocity, and Relational Accountability

Axiology not only enables a researcher to judge which knowledge is worthy of investigation but also concerns itself with the appropriate means through which that knowledge is gained (Wilson, 2008, p. 34). Shawn Wilson (2008) says, "If knowledge itself is the ultimate end, then any means of obtaining that end may be justified" (p. 34). As a researcher then, I have to ask myself: in this study, what will the knowledge that is generated by the participants of the study and myself be used for? What principles guide my pursuit of knowledge? What can I ethically do to generate and apply this knowledge to likeminded organizations?

Wilson (2008) in *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* articulates four principles that characterize an Indigenous axiology: respect, responsibility, reciprocity and relational accountability (p. 77). The first three principles are based on the three Rs put forth by Cora Weber-Pillwax (2001). An indigenous axiology is built on relational accountability—that is, being accountable to one's

relationships within research. Simply put, I will strive to treat the participants of this study with respect, reciprocity, and accountability and I will use transformative learning to do so.

This suggests that researchers cannot separate themselves from the subject of their research because they are an integral part of the process. Although I am not a direct part of the research under study, I plan to ensure that I do not inadvertently separate myself from the research. As a researcher, I have to be respectful of the requirements of the methodology that I choose and thoughtful about the use that the sharing of the results provides for the community. In both cases, I am responsible to all parties.

To further understand the implications of these principles on my research, I asked the questions that are asked by Creswell:

> how do my methods help to build respectful relationships between myself and my participants? What is my role as researcher in this relationship, and what are my responsibilities? What am I contributing or giving back to the relationship? Is the sharing, growth and learning that is taking place reciprocal? (Creswell, 2008, p. 77)

Critical theorists view research as a political and ethical act—it is not neutral. As is the case with qualitative research, most researchers try to bring themselves into their study in some way; I also, as mentioned previously, hope to bring my own personal experience of the site and participants into the research. I will weave in my own experiences through a thread within the overarching narrative to give the reader a context to understand and draw conclusions. Although reflexivity will be integrated into the

study, I will also discuss how my experiences and cultural background may affect the interpretations and conclusions drawn in the study (Creswell, 2008, p. 58).

A pedagogical principle that has always guided my education is my desire to ensure that the generation of knowledge and its diffusion is brought together with service. The notion that knowledge is to be used for the betterment of society springs from a deep-rooted belief that I hold. This is also something that guides the work of the Foundation and is one of the reasons that I chose to learn from the ICBP. In this way, as a researcher, I am an insider because I, like many of the individuals involved in the Foundation, live according to similar principles, which include the oneness of humanity, the equality of women and men, the abolition of prejudice, and the nobility of every human being. In another sense, I am an outsider because the social and cultural contexts within which the Foundation operates are foreign to me.

There is one final point that merits mentioning, which is an explanation for why I did not disclose the name of the Foundation and the location that the study took place. This was due to religious sensitivities and social constraints in a society that does not accept religion. As a researcher, I had to protect the anonymity of those that were being researched.

Research Paradigm of Storytelling for Transformative Learning

In this study, I am more concerned with understanding how processes unfold than I am with the particular outcomes that result from the evolution of a process. One way to capture a process is through the use of stories. Such stories strengthen the capability within us to think in terms of a process. When we tell a story, we capture the present snapshot of a process, while keeping one foot in the past and one foot in the future. We

appreciate the efforts that came before us while remaining mindful of the characters that will come into play in the future. Stories assist researchers to avoid the tendency to theorize, to experience feelings, understand relationships, appreciate the social and cultural contexts, and learn from processes (Creswell, 2008, p. 512). After examining multiple research methods, the narrative design was the one best suited to my aim.

Storytelling, as an element of transformative theory, can promote knowledge construction and generate learning for individuals and groups. The educational value of storytelling, in the context of my research paradigm, is transformative because as Wiessner and Pfahl (2007) suggest, "storytelling is the most meaningful way we have found of linking the past to the present for purposes of learning from the past, gaining insight for the present, and reframing a more constructive future" (p. 27).

Wiessner and Pfahl (2007) provide theoretical support for their assertion that storytelling can promote positive adult learning environments by outlining six themes that support the intentional use of storytelling: (a) rewriting the self—a narrative process of becoming; (b) listening to hear together; (c) creating connectedness; (d) questioning the validity of meta-narratives and "learning our way out"; (e) encouraging individual choice and responsible action for a just learning society; and (f) storytelling as a narrative technique to advance knowledge construction and learning.

The first theme suggests that using thought and language creatively to organize one's experiences through texts or stories for the purpose of rewriting the self can have transformative potential (Wiessner & Pfahl, 2007). Much of the work of rewriting the self begins with the individual but it also involves identifying a shared story within a group or community. Shared stories emerge in learning environments as adults listen to one

another's stories. Greene and Hogan (1995) suggests that it is in "hearing together" that educators find, "something like a common text emerging among us, one that—in our diversity—we begin to read and reread and even to rewrite" (p. 117). Learning to capture shared stories provides an environment where such collaboration becomes an antidote to individualism.

Shared stories also help us "not only voice who we are, but also recognize the other and come into a relationship of acceptance with the other by finding ways to acknowledge and integrate difference" (Wiessner & Pfahl, 2007, p.30). Such an integration of experience must also pay attention to questioning meta-narratives and navigating ourselves out of ways of being in order to work toward common goals as one collective rather than only pursuing individual goals. This effort must be made in the context of encouraging individual choice and responsible action for a just learning environment. In this way Wiessner and Pfahl (2007) suggest that "learners have freedom and responsibility to choose the lenses for viewing and interpreting their journeys" (p. 30).

Through narratives, individuals, groups, and organizations engage in a transformative process by imagining what has been and shaping what could be. If transformative learning is the process of effecting change in a frame of reference then telling or re-telling stories can provide an instrument for adults to read, understand, and define their world (Mezirow, 1997). By interrogating stories and learning from them, adult learners engage in a process of transformation for themselves and their communities.

As a researcher, I will listen to the experiences and stories of two women involved in the ICBP. I will draw out themes that emerge from the stories that they tell. Both the

stories that they share and the themes that emerge will serve as a concrete example for likeminded protagonists who are keen to benefit from such a learning process associated with institutional capacity building.

An Approach of Learning from Action: Consultation, Action, Reflection on Action, and Study

As a researcher, I have to continually ask myself: what is being learned, and who learns? I am learning from a process of action already underway. Therefore, I don't assume to *know* but I see myself as a *learner* benefiting from the accumulated experience generated by the Foundation. My approach to learning from action is guided by two overarching principles: reciprocal learning and collaboration.

Justice requires that each person contribute in some way to the generation, application, and diffusion of knowledge. Knowledge is necessary for social change to occur and for society to advance. Without knowledge, civilization would cease to progress. Yet, the individual is not the sole possessor of knowledge. Knowledge is generated as individuals collaborate and work together to serve their communities. Likewise, collaborators of the Foundation (CBOs) generate their own body of knowledge while simultaneously contributing to part of the wider body of knowledge that the Foundation is co-constructing. The Foundation and I are collaborators in a learning process—as I learn, the Foundation learns; as the Foundation learns, I learn. Specifically, I hope to learn about critical approaches to strengthen a learning process associated with institutional capacity building. However, at this point and due to the vast experience of the Foundation, I am engaged in a process of *learning from* them.

Just as the generation of knowledge is central to our efforts to contribute to a better world, so too is systematic learning at the heart of the approach I have chosen to adopt. In designing such an approach to my research, I ask myself, how does research, done in a spirit of collaboration and reciprocity, contribute to society?

Wilson (2008) suggests that "stages of inquiry" may complement the approach used since the researcher, in developing a general roadmap for where he/she wants to go, should avoid rigidity while allowing for change and adaptation along the way (p.40). In this way, I hope to adopt an approach that welcomes the opportunity to change according to the emerging needs. Although there is an array of things to be studied, including systems, processes, structures, forces, behaviours, and their historical evolution. This thesis will examine the learning *process* associated with institutional capacity building.

As previously mentioned, the two overarching principles of reciprocal learning and collaboration guide my efforts. As such, I have chosen to use the approach adopted by the Foundation—an approach of action, reflection on action, consultation with a community of learners, and study in light of experience (The Foundation, 2011a). Action, reflection, consultation, and study do not represent a sequence of activities in time but they are interacting components of one approach (FUNDAEC, 2011a).

Practically, my research will use this approach in two distinct ways: Firstly, action, reflection and consultation will be a part of the participant research approach through the act of sharing the narrative of the CBO. The narrative research design supports this process because every story that is shared includes elements of action, reflection, consultation, and study. The act of telling their story as a member of a CBO and Foundation will enable them to reflect on action. What they share will be captured

and recorded in the study and it will be shared with them. As organizations, they are engaged in a constant process of learning and sharing their experiences, which will require that they reflect on their own approach to learning as an organization.

Secondly, as a researcher, I hope to read the documents that have been created by the Foundation as a result of their experience, then analyze the content carefully and thoroughly and reflect on how the knowledge captured in those documents correspond to the interviews that I carry out. These two elements will ensure that my own approach to learning is coherent.

Such an approach will enable this study to capture a snapshot of the process undertaken by the Foundation's ICBP. The two guiding principles of reciprocal learning and collaboration are aligned with transformative educational theory because it treats our relationship to knowledge, not as absolute, authoritative, transferable, or static. Instead, transformative education fosters relationships that are interdependent and participatory. Participants in an educational process are treated as "critical co-investigators" of a constant unveiling of reality, thus enabling them to transform it (Freire, 1970, p. 81).

Research Design

The study under consideration will be carried out as a narrative research design and it will include the use of three methods: three (1-hour) interviews with two participants, observational research field notes at a local CBO, and the study of documents created by the Foundation itself. As a distinct form of qualitative research, a narrative design usually tells the story of one or two individuals by gathering data necessary for the collection of stories, conveying individual experience through a chronology of events, and exploring the shared meanings of the story that have

implications on theory and practice (Creswell, 2008, p. 512). In one sense, stories are an accessible instrument to convey data to an audience.

In this study, I will listen to the story of one of the many protagonists who collaborates with the Foundation: Jane, a woman who runs the CBO in a province nearby. I will also identify generative themes that emerge in the interviews with Sally, the woman who works at the Foundation. Sharing these themes will capture the efforts of the Foundation itself to foster a learning process that guides the CBOs while learning from an individual who operates one of the most longstanding organizations will illustrate the impact of the educational process on CBOs and the community it serves.

In general, it is important to tell our own stories but if it is not possible to do so, collaborating with others to tell our stories can also be of benefit. Nevertheless, the notion that an individual can tell another's story is highly contested and requires the development of particular capabilities on the part of the researcher. This is one of the obstacles faced in any narrative research design and one towards which I sought to develop a learning attitude. In order to do this, questions for the interview focused on individual experience, perceptions, attitudes, and areas of learning based on their experience with the program. By contrast, the interview with Sally did not seek to tell her story but captured themes based on the experience of the Foundation working with CBOs. Interviews were carried out in a confidential and safe environment where participants felt comfortable to share their thoughts, insights, and experiences. The Brock University Research Ethics Board granted clearance for my study with humans (File number: 11-301-MOGADIME) before the study was carried out.

I made efforts to carry out the major characteristics of a narrative research design as described by Creswell (2008) as it relates to my interviews with Jane, which included: creating a record of the experiences of an individual while paying due attention to understanding how the individual's history and past experiences contribute to their present situation; developing a chronology of events, which differentiates itself from other research methods because of the researcher's ability to analyze a sequence of events in the context of the evolution of a process over time; collecting individual stories through field texts that represent information from conversations, one-on-one interviews, and discussions; restorying, which is the process that researchers undertake to collect stories, analyzing them for key elements and themes, then rewriting them; coding for emergent themes enabling the reader to understand the intricacies and depth within the story, which are typically presented after the story has been told; providing a context or setting in which the story unfolds; and collaborating with participants in the creation of the story (pp. 517-522).

The study under consideration was carried out as a narrative research design. As mentioned previously, the sources of data include interviews and the study of the Foundation's documents.

Interviews and the Documents of the Foundation

Data from this study came from interviews and the Foundation's documents. I conducted an in-depth qualitative exploration, using a narrative research design, to consider how elements of the learning process at the Foundation give rise to capacity building in organizations. I carried out three 1-hour, personal, in-depth and semi-

structured interviews with two individuals. This allowed for the exploration of one narrative while also conveying different opinions and views to generate common themes.

The two participants were middle-aged individuals that have at least 5 years of experience working with the Foundation. I asked the Foundation itself to identify two of their most experienced individuals to be interviewees in order to produce the greatest results. Experience is the most important factor in participant selection since the Foundation has been in operation for a short period of time. I asked that they be middle-aged so that they are mature enough to answer difficult questions. Likewise, it is important that two participants be selected in order to provide greater perspective on the learning process. One person may have provided a very in-depth experience but two participants will provide an added dimension that will enrich the research under study. I left the choice of participants up to the Foundation since they know their employees the best.

The two participants were contacted through email and they were asked to consider carrying out three 1-hour interviews. Pre-determined semi-structured questions were emailed to them a week before the interview to provide them with time to reflect and prepare. The interview, which took place in their hometown, lasted as long as they were willing to devote to answering questions, with a maximum of 1 hour allotted to it. Both participants were interviewed three times in order to develop a rapport and friendship with participants while also ensuring that the conversation is deep enough to draw out valuable lessons. Through experience, I learned that the latter conversations brought out the richest insights due to the friendship and comfort that had been established. Since they were very eager, the breaks between interviews were quite short.

Interviews used semi-structured questions and involved one-on-one interactions in person in order to encourage in-depth exploration. They were conducted using a narrative interview design because it offered the best possibility to provide a meaningful description of their experiences and challenges as they have engaged in such an learning process, as explained earlier. I chose semi-structured questions because the area of research is about a learning process that is broad and involves many components. Asking structured questions would have diminished my ability to generate discussion based on experience and would have inadvertently detracted from my purpose, which is to explore a learning process associated with institutional capacity building. Semi-structured questions enabled themes to emerge in a natural fashion and allowed other relevant themes to be considered. In addition, listening to their narratives required an openness that drew out themes that further helped me explore the learning process.

Prior to being interviewed, participants were asked to avoid identifying specific individuals by name when they were asked to "share a story of an individual or community that has been influenced by the work of your CBO." However, since they inadvertently provided this information, I made sure to change all names, location (e.g., towns, cities), and institutions and replace them with pseudonyms.

When I conducted interviews, I asked the two individuals to narrate their experiences. I asked the participants to share particular elements of their story so that a storyline emerged (Creswell, 2008, p. 518). I tried to create a comfortable environment by asking open-ended and dialog-based questions, thus creating a space for mutual learning and information sharing (Spradley, 1979). I also tried to build a relationship characterized by fellowship and trust with the participants I interviewed.

Interviews were in person and examined three interrelated areas of interest: a narration of the experiences of the CBO over the last 5 years, the impact of the learning process on the CBO, and questions related to institutional capacity building in general. Debriefing occurred at the end of each of the interviews to ensure that participants' questions were answered and that the information explored in the interview had been well understood. Participants in the study had the option of requesting the transcripts of their interview and the summary of major points taken from it shortly after the interview had occurred; this information will be sent through email. The review of the transcript or synopsis by the participant ensured that information was correct and in accordance with their wishes while providing a context for their comments.

The other sources of data included the Foundation's documents, which will be another source of data that plays a complementary role to the data generated through interviews. In addition to the themes that emerged in the interviews, the study has also benefitted greatly from the analysis of the documents created by the Foundation. I am including these documents in my analysis because they provide another perspective to view the learning process associated with ICB and they also provide a more concise formulation of the it. Likewise, individuals who work in the Foundation create documents but the organization itself agrees that these documents reflect their experience thereby providing a credible source. Reading the documents before and after the interviews will also provide a cross-reference to gain insight into the themes that were shared in the interview and they will bring greater depth and breadth to what the interviewees have said. The documents may also provide information that contradicts what is shared by an interviewee and in that way, the findings will provide a more accurate and full picture of

the learning process associated with ICB.

Data Collection and Analysis

As a researcher carrying out a narrative design, learning took place as I listened to stories and experiences shared by Jane and Sally. According to Creswell (2008), "The stories constitute the data, and the researcher typically gathers it through interviews or informal conversations" (p. 517). As was previously mentioned, themes related to a learning process for ICB emerged from two main sources: interviews and documents. The sequence of data collection included: (a) study and analysis of the Foundation's documents prior to the interviews, (b) visit to the Foundation and CBO during which interviews were carried out, (c) coding the data from the interview into themes, and (d) further analysis of the documents in light of the themes that resulted from the interviews.

The data collection for this study consisted of two parts; firstly, it included my reading of the CBO based on my own participation in the activities of the CBO, my personal interactions during the interviews, and informal conversations as described earlier. Secondly it included the collection of the words and stories as data from the two participants whom I interviewed. Secondary data collection included the analysis of relevant documents created by the Foundation. I sought to make use of best practices in data collection including member checks of transcriptions, observations, interpretations, and themes (Gallagher, 2011a). As in any good qualitative study, the multiple sources and extensive data collection aimed to convey the ICBP at the Foundation in the clearest way possible. I have tried to provide a realistic and persuasive account of what was learned so that the reader will be assured of its credibility and accuracy.

In the second component of data collection, which included three 1-hour, semi-structured interviews with Sally and Jane, I used the data from the conversations to analyze their experiences, challenges, insights, and learning to draw out themes that helped me to find answers to the study's learning objectives. I also read and analyzed the documents created by the Foundation and contrasted this data source with the interviews. As mentioned previously, my interviews with the two participants required me to ask each of them semi-structured questions during our meeting. In addition to the four questions provided in the first Chapter, the questions I asked the CBO founder and the Foundation's facilitator are provided in Appendix A and B.

Analyzing the data included the development of a matrix that was used to organize the material. After this, I coded the data into meaningful themes through an inductive process (Gallager, 2011a). The themes, which are codes aggregated together to form a major idea, were organized to provide an understanding of the learning process under study (Gallagher, 2011a). As a researcher, I understand that my interpretations of the findings that emerged from the data are not neutral (Creswell, 2008). To verify my conclusions, I reflected on bias within my personal understanding of the data by comparing and contrasting my views with the documents of the Foundation and relevant literature. I also engaged in a dialogical process with the participants and myself as researcher to further refine findings in the data. In addition, I have tried to address the limitations of the study and make suggestions for future research.

Ethical Considerations

During this effort I always made sure to safeguard the privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity of the individuals and group included in the study. I continually reminded

myself of the three objectives of research ethics: to protect human participants, ensure that research is conducted in a way that serves the interests of individuals and groups in examining research activities for ethical soundness (Creswell, 2008). Before conducting the interviews, I received written and informed consent from each of the participants to safeguard their privacy and show respect and kindness towards them. Upon completion of the study, I will share all of my findings with the participants of the study. I also felt that the participants shared their opinions and ideas freely with me, thus creating a collaborative experience for the participants and myself. In addition, I tried to be sure to show sensitivity and respect towards all religious and cultural practices.

Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have explained my research paradigm through a description of the axiology I will use as a researcher. I have tried to ensure that my relationship with participants of the study was undertaken through a praxis of collaboration, which is based on respect, responsibility, reciprocity, and relational accountability and I have shared my approach to learning from action. I also explained how my research will consist of a narrative research design and include my approach to data collection and analysis. I ended the Chapter by including ethical considerations I took into account as I approached the participants and research site.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

In Chapter 2, I considered some of the inadequacies of research that are based on processes that build institutional capacity in CBOs to contribute to the betterment of individuals and communities. I set out to learn from a Foundation that has accumulated a degree of experience in this area. After visiting the Foundation and interviewing Sally and Jane, I have learned a great deal and know that sharing some of the experiences of the Foundation will shed light on the process of institutional capacity building. Chapter 4 will tell a story that gives context to the site, participants, and program and discuss three overarching themes: the importance of institutional capacity building, the elements of a methodology for building capacity in CBOs, the characteristics of a process of capacity building with a CBO; and the Foundation's approach to synthesizing and sharing learning.

Contextualizing the Site, Participants, and Program

Before I arrive in the rural village home to the CBO, Sally gives me orders to give to Jane. She wants me to tell her to stop working so hard—a message I promise to convey. When I meet Jane at noon in a dusty parking lot after our interview at a hotpot restaurant the night before, she looks very professional in a cream-coloured suit and black heels. Her assistant, who has come to this part of the country to learn from being with Jane on a regular basis, follows her. We greet each other and enter a 30-person bus while making our way to the back row of seats. Jane takes out her lesson plan and reads it to me. I see that she has put a lot of thought into preparing for the class, ensuring that every element of the lesson meets the needs of the participants. We chat and laugh together as we drive through the city and eventually into the village. We speak about our family and

get to know each other a little more. We also look at the view, which is laced with a magnificent lake, mountains on both sides, and fields of rice, tea, and tobacco with a colour palette that artists could only imagine. We soon arrive in the village where we begin a long walk on the dusty streets to the school.

The school serves multiple villages. The majority of the people in the area are of indigenous backgrounds. Jane says that they originally started the program there because "they are more pure, less doubt[ing] and eager to try. They want the best future for their kids" (Jane, Interview 1, September 14, 2012, p. 3). She goes on: "the school has connections with the families. Like now we are working at school and we have classes in the village. So they are connected" (Jane, Interview 1, September 14, 2012, p. 3). I get the sense from Jane that the school is like a community—a place in which individuals develop their capacity to serve others.

As we approach the gate of the school, I notice that Jane stands up straight. Her demeanour changes and I see that her approach to service is calm but serious. She greets and smiles at everyone she passes; likewise, everyone is aware and of her entrance. As we draw near the school courtyard, we walk past an outdoor chalkboard that has a story on it written by one of her students. Her assistant tells me that it is about how Jane and the program have impacted his life. Later when I ask Jane about it, she humbly brushes it off and says that she hasn't read it yet.

A young girl approaches Jane as we continue through the yard. From the look in her eyes, she loves Jane like a mother. Jane stops and explains to me that this is the student she was telling me about last night. For 2 years, they have been holding a junior youth group in a village without any physical space. The junior youth routinely bring chairs from their

home and they carry out the class outside. The day before we arrived at the school, this girl's father called Jane and told her that he rebuilt his home and added a third floor so that Jane's organization could have an office and a space to hold the junior youth group.

After our conversation, we walk up three flights of stairs and enter a large classroom with blue and white walls on one side and a wall of large windows on the other looking out to fields. Many of the parents of the students work these fields to earn a livelihood. The book *Breezes of Confirmation* is resting on the student's desk. Before the class, the students work together to clean the classroom by sweeping, clearing desks, and fixing curtains. When they finish, they sit down and begin to work on exercises in the book. As they do this, Jane greets each of the students lovingly. They clearly love her and look forward to her coming.

Jane and the students begin the class with a warm greeting. Shortly after, they sing a song with loud voices—an educational practice common to this area. I sit down, but Jane's assistant tells me that teachers always stand, so I stand. The class lasts for 2 hours and includes singing, reading a story about hope, completing exercises, memorization, and lots of discussion. There is a vibrant energy in the room and it becomes apparent to me upon listening to their conversation in the classroom that everyone wants to be there because the words in the book are having an impact on how they see the world and themselves. As the lesson comes to a close, we say goodbye and Jane visits the homeroom teacher to share how the class went. We leave the school for the dusty streets and catch a bus back into the city, exhausted but exhilarated.

Institutional Capacity Building: An Instrument for a Larger Purpose

The first theme that emerges from my interviews with Jane and Sally is the unique role and purpose of institutional capacity building. Jane works with one such organization in a small farming village. She views her organization as an institution that contributes to releasing the potential of a growing group of individuals to contribute to the betterment of their communities. In a document entitled "Releasing Potential," the Foundation (2012) describes their vision of the purpose of local institutions:

> In the effort to build capacity in local populations, little can be accomplished without attention to building institutional capacity at the local level. The purpose of local institutions is, of course, not to supplant government, but to enable local peoples to do their part in the work of development—to mobilize human resources, build capacity and channel and harmonize diverse talents and temperaments into the work of development at the community level. (p. 4)

A local institution serves as an instrument for the long-term development of the individual and community. Development, however, is dependent upon knowledge. As institutions generate and apply knowledge to the community, it develops. But how does an institution develop capacity to do this? Institutions do not naturally generate and apply knowledge without aid or assistance. Unaided and unaccompanied, we are each unable to carry out much. Within a collaborative learning environment, institutions with the aid of the Foundation undergo a process of learning about how to work with others to apply knowledge to the community for its development. Sally comments:

> I think that the process of knowledge generation is really critical to the whole idea of institutional capacity. An institution is an instrument for something larger and

> in this case it's development. And our whole understanding of development is organized around learning, organized around knowledge.
>
> You know the core process of social and economic development is, the generation and application of knowledge and the idea is really that in order to do that we really have to have an interconnected web of organizations that are working at different levels to generate and systematize learning into a new body of knowledge. My understanding of the way that we structure these organizations is so that really we are building capacity in these organizations to engage more and more people in this process of generating and applying knowledge. At the local level and then feeding some of the learning up to organizations that are operating at national or international levels that can kind of systematize that learning and feed it back to the grassroots**.**
>
> Any kind of thing about institutional capacity has to be based on the generation and application of knowledge and the roles of organizations to serve as centres of learning. Otherwise I think it misses something important. (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, pp. 25-26)

The Foundation's choice to work specifically with organizations was calculated. Instead of working with a large group of individuals or development workers—which would have allowed them to reach larger numbers at a faster rate—they chose to develop capacity at a sophisticated and complex level through the establishment of long-lasting organizations. Institutions are intended to contribute to the material, intellectual, and spiritual development of society. Sally explains:

> What we are doing is we are really creating the embryos of these long lasting organizations in the community that are really going to contribute long term to the development of community. An organization is long lasting. One day when the… Foundation, the current people are gone, other people will be here. …Things will come and go but largely an organization is a long lasting permanent structure. It can build up and mobilize resources. It can do more. So I think, the idea is that the modality that we have done it in is really designed to nurture the long-term sustainable development of the community. The building of capacity at sophisticated levels, not superficial levels and really the facilitation of the process of generating and applying knowledge within a given framework. (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, p. 26)

As Sally suggests, the development of society requires greater capacity in individuals, organizations, and communities to generate and apply knowledge to improve human affairs. This will not be accomplished without the participation of more individuals and institutions in decision-making about their future. Such decisions are not characterized by negotiation and compromise but require a consultative environment in which they arrive at consensus on the best choice of action. An environment like this requires all individuals to search for truth and allows for the expression of justice.

The Foundation sees participation in decision-making as a principle that guides their interactions with the CBOs. Jane stresses the importance of CBOs making their own decisions in my interview with her:

> Each CBO has a situation. Each CBO has different needs. Actually, I think many things we share. And they know. The thing is, finally they don't make decisions

> for the CBO. The CBO themselves should develop this capacity to grow on their own. But sometimes because of this, it's so hard…I want them to make decisions for us [laughing]. What should I do? Just tell me! I go and I say whether it is good or not. (Interview 2, September 14, 2012, pp. 12-13)

The purpose and role of institutions becomes concrete when the associated principles that guide the work of an institution are elaborated. One such principle includes an institutional approach to collective decision-making. Decisions pave the path forward for organizations and they are always supported and guided by the Foundation. Further, decision-making spaces for the institutions participating in the development process provide a supportive environment in which capacity, empowerment, and participation is fostered within local populations. Every decision made through consultation has both a material and spiritual dimension. Part of the capacity building process is the ability to make decisions that reflect the coherence between material and spiritual reality. For example, in developing capabilities associated with financial resources, the CBOs learn the practical requirements of creating a financial plan but they also look at underlying concepts like generosity, prosperity, and collaboration that also influence how they go about making financial decisions.

Institutional capacity building operates on the principle of universal participation and avoids the tendency to presume that social change will occur through the efforts of a small group of individuals. Institutions are concerned with engaging a growing group of individuals in a collective process of learning to contribute to the material and spiritual well-being of their communities. Such a process encourages individuals to participate in the generation, application, and diffusion of knowledge, which is the greatest force

advancing civilization forward. Likewise, it requires structures at the local and international levels to facilitate learning about development.

The strengthening of structures for this process is not solely the responsibility of individuals and communities but is dependent on institutions that are dedicated to capturing and sharing learning through the creation of structures. Closely related to the concept of participation in a collective process of learning is the idea that institutions are concerned with capacity building within a growing group of people to contribute to their own progress. Institutions, then, are concerned with accompanying a rise in capacity of protagonists to contribute to social change.

Institutional capacity is built as institutions work together with individuals and communities. They provide a constant flow of assistance, resources, encouragement, and guidance to individuals and communities. Institutions also consult among themselves and openly with the people they serve and channel the latent potentiality of both individuals and the collective towards the transformation of society. Institutions strive to: read society and identify the needs and forces acting within it; translate a vision into a program with specific lines of action; manage financial resources; raise capacity in human resources; and interact with likeminded governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Program Elements

The program elements that are part of the process of institutional capacity building include human resource development, the curriculum that is based on seven capabilities for institutional development, and training in a program (the junior youth empowerment program in this case) that builds capabilities in local populations. In order

to convey a more complete picture of the program elements this section will draw from both sources of data: the interviews and the documents of the Foundation.

Conceptualizing Human Resource Development

The Foundation has found that the degree of success experienced by a local organization is dependent on the capacity of the individuals who choose to begin and implement the organization. The Foundation is unique in this respect because it not only trains human resources to begin CBOs but also identifies the human resources as well. The identification of candidates to start an organization and the introduction of this possibility to them in an appropriate manner are core aspects of their methodology for ICB (institutional capacity building). The Foundation (2012) explains how they identify and develop human resources:

> At this stage, the primary method for developing human resources is to come into contact with a wide range of people that are interested in community service and social and economic development and to introduce them to the core concepts of the Foundation as well as some of the programs of the Foundation that strive to embody these concepts. Such sharing typically occurs through the study of relevant materials at both formal and informal seminars consisting of small groups of individuals. (p. 7)

The Foundation is very thoughtful about both the qualities and characteristics of the individuals under consideration and the conditions that will enable those individuals to be successful in running an organization. Sally reiterated repeatedly that the Foundation is learning a great deal about this area. She explained that they have begun to

identify certain characteristics that they look for in candidates who could establish an organization:

> One of course is a learning attitude. It's very important that somebody you know has a very humble attitude of learning and is able to think about things in a different way. And you know, it doesn't mean that they don't have opinions but they are able to think about things in a different way. You can tell if someone is fixed on their own ideas or open to thinking about things in a different way. Another thing is the service orientation as well…we know that there are people out there who really aspire to be of service to their communities and we know that individual capacity is important and institutional capacity is more important and really you know from the very beginning, from the outset, we really emphasize that they are really starting their own independent organization, and that we will be a partnering collaborator with them and not a, you know, a boss. And sometimes it takes a while for that to sink in but we really emphasize that. You know, we really have to look for the people that really, serve. (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, p. 1)

In addition to a posture of learning and an orientation to service, Sally mentioned two other characteristics that they look for in candidates:

> Another thing that is really important is the ability to see potential. Cause you know**,** we don't look at people as masses of problems and needs. We look at them as a wealth of potential waiting to be tapped. But sometimes that potential isn't always a 100% obvious and invariably you know people will run into challenges. …There are all of these challenges and what we have seen is you know some

> people can continue to see the potential of these programs and of the population they are working with and they can persevere and overcome those challenges. And find ways of kind of expanding their social spaces and carrying out these programs. And then there are other people who become very, very discouraged.
>
> Another thing is, a certain level of maturity or ability to work independently . . . we have learned over time that we really have to be careful with somebody—it isn't so much age of [or] education level, it's just one has to assess the degree of maturity and ability to work independently of an individual. Because there are various paths of service that one can take and I think that one job of an institution is to really evaluate you know the extent to which individuals are suitable to different paths of service. (Interview 1, September 14, 2012, p. 2)

To summarize, when the Foundation identifies certain human resources, they among a variety of things, look for: a learning attitude, a service orientation towards their communities, the ability to see potential in others, and maturity or the ability to work independently. Needless to say, the Foundation does not depend solely on the identification of individuals at a consultative meeting. In fact, that is often just the beginning. In our conversations together, I realized that it is possible to see one of these characteristics of an individual in the context of a seminar but it is quite another thing to see those qualities manifested in action within their communities. This is precisely why the Foundation tries to take people through a process of study *and* action. Sally says:

> People grow so much from doing this. And that's really, I mean, that's an amazing thing to see, I mean some of these resources have really blossomed. And I think, one thing is that you really have to take people through a process before

> you can see what they are capable of. …You work with human resources over time, over decades and decades. (Interview 1, September 14, 2012, p. 3)

In my conversations with Sally, she explains that they struggle to find the requisite characteristics present in one person. Beyond searching for these characteristics, they try to find individuals who understand conceptually and align their actions with the core concepts of the Foundation. Oftentimes individuals who are able to think deeply about concepts often struggle to put those concepts in action. Likewise, people who struggle to grasp the concepts in the study are often more apt to express them in action.

Nevertheless, a process of capacity building accommodates the needs for weaknesses to develop into strengths over time. Human resource development enables individuals to progress through a process of study and action in order to determine whether they are suited to starting and implementing an organization. Advancing through a process enables the Foundation to see capacity in a variety of settings. Sally explains,

> One thing is really capacity exists in unlikely places. You know? There is a wealth of capacity in rural populations and people with less education just because they haven't been given the opportunities that people from wealthier cities or communities get. There is this wealth of capacity that is out there (Interview 1, September 14, 2012, p. 4)

Taking candidates through a process of study and action enables the Foundation to be confident in making a commitment to working with the individual to start an organization and it enables the individual to understand more fully what is involved in starting an organization. Nevertheless, Sally suggests that the Foundation still has much to learn from this area:

> You know I wouldn't say okay and now we can identify those kinds of people when we first meet them. We really don't know. I just think we have to be very cautious and really say look we don't know and we really need time with individuals. (Interview 1, September 14, 2012, p. 4)

Conceptualizing the Role of Content and Knowledge—Curriculum Organized Around Seven Institutional Capabilities

One of the most important program elements is the role of content and knowledge that gives rise to institutional capacity building for the betterment of the community through the development of capabilities. A capability is a concept used in this educational setting that means "a developed capacity to think and act in a well-defined sphere of activity according to a well-defined purpose" (FUNDAEC, 2010, p. 47). It could include an understanding of concepts, the assimilation of relevant information, the acquisition of a set of interrelated skills, and the development of particular attitudes, habits, and spiritual qualities.

The Foundation has identified seven institutional capabilities. The core capabilities include constructing an evolving conceptual framework for social action, reading social reality and forming a vision, translating a vision into a program, and implementing a program in a learning mode. Capabilities that are separate from but support the core include raising up and deploying human resources, developing and managing financial resources, and forming and maintaining relationships with government and civil society (The Foundation, 2012).

The curriculum is intended to contribute to the development of capabilities for community development. It is a living and dynamic body of knowledge that is shared in

an educational setting that can be likened to a seminar. Most often it includes a set of materials, a group of participants, and a facilitator. According to the pace of the group, the facilitator guides the participants to look deeply at the concepts embedded in the text. A conversation arises among the participants in the seminars and it begins with an exploration of the immediate meaning of the text and the application and implications of the concepts to their life and the life of the community. In our discussion at the hotpot restaurant, Jane reflected on how the materials had impacted her:

> First of all, [the] Foundation really has, for me, I think has very wonderful materials. …It really can help individuals recognize they are able to do something. Which is totally before you don't know. Or one is you don't [do] or you don't have an opportunity…the materials can really help you to understand more about the society and also help you to learn more about how to develop yourself, based on how to serve. (Interview 1, September 14, 2012, p. 1)

She mentions service, an essential aspect of the curriculum. Jane suggests that the purpose of the materials is twofold—to learn how to develop oneself and to understand society in order to better contribute to its development. These are two inseparable parts of one process and what connects them is service. An individual's ability to develop is directly proportional to her or his ability to serve others. Likewise, service to others contributes to the development of society and changes in society naturally contribute to the betterment of those individuals that make up society. Sally says:

> What I see in our CBOs, the ones that end up developing, I think, are the ones that *really* want to serve. They have this desire and aspiration to serve the community. Because they are not, it's not just that they want a job or this or that. …But most

> important, I think number one is the desire to serve. (Interview 2, September 11, 2012, p. 14)

The capabilities embedded in the content are expressed through service. Service is the axis around which the curriculum revolves. Therefore, the educational experience seeks to develop both depth of understanding and practical experience. Sally elaborates:

> So these seven capabilities, we are going to be studying materials with them at this stage that are looking at these seven capabilities that organizations have to develop.
>
> You have to have the concepts, really, you have to have the actual understanding of the content and methodology of what you are doing; if you just have the conceptual understanding it's not enough. They have to understand the junior youth books, they have to understand the elements of the program. They have to really understand the EAP text, they have to understand what it means to be a good facilitator, you know. You have to know those things and you really have to accompany them in practice. They have to have some accompaniment in the practice. Those things are really critical. At a program level but also as an institutional capabilities level. They have to really think about the principles underlying financial management. They have to set up a system but you go with them as they set up those things. (Interview 1, September 11, 2012 p. 21)

Concepts, which form part of a capability, are studied in depth during the training. In my interview with Sally, she felt that the understanding of certain concepts and the ability to articulate them are an essential aspect of institutional capacity building. Similarly, she reiterated how important it is for individuals that are beginning

organizations to deeply understand the capabilities. The Foundation has witnessed how depth of understanding and clarity of thought at the level of the individual has contributed to the success of the institution. Advancing understanding of concepts happens over time through a process of study and action in which the content is made and re-made as steps are taken. Sally says:

> We really work on building their conceptual framework at this early stage. Now granted, it's a process. We study these things with them over and over and over again. Clarity at the level of thought is really very important in these early stages. (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, p. 6)

> There are things that we have seen over the past 5 years…the understanding of the individual, we've seen is probably one of the greatest influences on the program…the understanding of the individual has an extraordinary influence over how they carry out their program. (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, p. 8)

Core capabilities are used in practice and the tendency to treat them as a theoretical exercise is avoided. The organizations apply them very practically in the diversity of activities they carry out. The Foundation is learning how to ensure that the participants in the educational process have the opportunity to both study the capabilities throughout the curriculum and that they are accompanied to apply them. Accompaniment in this context can be understood as offering support in practice. Sally comments:

> You know we find that it's really important and sometimes in our experience when we have studied things like conceptual framework, reading society, that people think it's very abstract. (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, p. 15)

> But then later you see that they use it, so how can it be that abstract. Also, I think that we have to be better at, you know sometimes in the past what we have done is studied these things with them and we have divorced it a little from application, doing it with them on the ground. So I think that the idea at this time is that we go with them and at the same time we begin to carry out activities to implement. So when we study reading society, maybe we'll have them think about their community. You know we have to identify a geographically manageable area in which they are planning to work. (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, p. 17)

> Like often when they read the materials, they don't understand it at first but then through kind of doing things we really, and as they progress you know we began to align the action with the concepts more. (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, p. 5)

The educational process avoids the tendency to fragment thought and action and instead views 'being' and 'doing' as inseparable aspects of knowing. One concrete way that the Foundation accompanies the candidates in practice is by going with them into their hometowns to develop a language of practice to articulate the purpose, vision, aims, and activities of their organization. Sally says:

> Because one of the first things that they do when they go back to their community is really to start to introduce the program to government leaders, to schools, to principals, to their families. If we don't complete this as a part of the training, it's very easy for them to get a bit tongue-tied…we really have to help them think about the language that they are going to use. How are they going to introduce

> this program, how are they going to introduce the concepts underlying the program and part of that also entails familiarizing them with educational policies. (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, pp. 10-11)

Similarly, Sally explains that the purpose of education in this context is to enable institutions to develop capabilities that apply to their efforts to transform society. Since there is an inseparable relationship between the individual and the institution, it adds a degree of complexity to the discussion. The development of the individual is directly related to the development of capacity at an institutional level. From one perspective, an institution is a distinct and autonomous entity that develops independent of individuals. From another perspective, an institution is entirely dependent on the capacity of individuals for its proper development. Nevertheless, the curriculum created by the Foundation intends to develop capacity within individuals to think about the development of institutional capabilities.

The study and application of the institutional capabilities embedded in the curriculum is a process that advances over time. Participants are not expected to understand the content from the outset but to engage in learning concepts and applying them to their institutional efforts. In my conversation with Jane, she agreed that the initial training was one part of a very long process. She explains that many things were only learned as she gained experience implementing her vision of the organization she established. Jane says: “Of course, many skills I didn’t learn at that time. And also, I couldn’t learn everything at that time” (Interview 1, September 14, 2012, p. 2). Sally reiterates this point as well: “These 3 months isn’t the beginning or the end. They have

some time to study these things gradually. But we have to make sure we know the content of that course well" (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, p. 9).

The study of the curriculum during the first training creates a foundation that has a lasting effect on both the individual and the institution. This reflects the inseparability of theory and practice, which is an essential aspect of the learning process. Everything that is learned manifests itself in action. Likewise, everything that is learned in action informs theory. Sally comments:

> We gather them together in some place and we take them through a very good study, we train them very well because what we have learned is whatever they see in those three months, they do later. It includes their entire life in terms of the organization**.** It's very important that they get a very good grounding conceptually. (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, p. 6)

The ability to unite theory and practice is made possible through the writing and publication of their own curriculum, which is generated through experience. The Foundation (2012) comments:

> The Institutional Capability Building curriculum is not written all at once, but evolves over time as experience is gained. In general, curriculum is written and studied in response to educational needs that are apparent in the CBOs and refined over time. However, at no time does action in the field await the development of appropriate curriculum. As experience is gained, it is drawn on to add and refine existing curriculum which ultimately can be developed into a formal set of materials ready for publication. (p. 10)

This approach to knowledge resists fragmentation into academic disciplines. The integration of theoretical, experiential, and practical approaches to knowledge is refined further as institutional capabilities for the transformation of the community act as the purpose that gives shape to educational content. Since institutional capabilities organize the knowledge within the curriculum, the construction of educational content becomes a response to the opportunities for community change. This will be discussed further in conceptualizing the Foundation's role of synthesizing learning.

In addition to supporting the organizations in practice, the curriculum and training also enables participants to develop standards that will apply to the candidates' organization. The curriculum also advances their understanding of concepts and principles that are important for the everyday functioning of their organization. One concept that is fostered from the outset is the idea of organic growth and how the candidates are advancing a process over time. Sally elaborates:

> It's about what are the standards by which you want to run your own organization. ...Concepts and principles are very important at this stage. The idea of organic growth, the idea of having lines of action. You know, here we are doing a jy program so we aren't going to go and do a bunch of other things…it's so common in our society to have event-based things you know. Or to kind of, or to get excited about this or that. But really we are training people to carry out processes on a long-term basis and these processes are complex. Moral and spiritual empowerment of junior youth is a complex process. You have a rich program that's three years in length where you are really trying to work with a group of junior youth during that

> time and develop their powers of expression and their spiritual perception and their ability to carry out service projects. (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, p. 16)

Training in the JYEP That Builds Capabilities in Local Populations

The final element of the program includes the need for CBOs to carry out a particular program that builds capacity in local populations. Organizations are assisted to implement either the EAP or the JYEP. My study only considered the latter program. By assisting organizations to offer one of the programs, the Foundation envisions that a process of capacity building will take root among an entire population.

> The Foundation has learned that alongside the development of a methodology for establishing and strengthening capacity in community-based organizations, adequate attention must be paid to developing the curriculum, methodology and enhancing the quality of the programs implemented by the CBOs—which are in themselves complete programs aimed at building capacity in a given population. (The Foundation, 2012, p. 10)

Doing so requires that adequate attention be given to training CBOs in the JYEP. The nature and quality of this element of the training in the JYEP determines their ability to increase the quantity of those involved. Sally considers some aspects of the JYEP that the Foundation stresses:

> So one has to really understand the junior youth are really at a certain age, they are able to focus, they are able to think deeply about concepts. The animator really challenges them to think deeply about the concepts in the text.
>
> The junior youth program has a number of elements—it has the study of the text, which is at the fore, it has the service activities and one has to understand

> that the idea isn't to go and create activities for the students and then have them passively participate but to help them really analyze the needs of the community, identify acts of service and then carry them out. You know, and that relies on a deeper understanding that we are trying to build capacity in these students to be the protagonists of the spiritual and material development of their communities. The relationship between the students, visiting parents is an important element of the program. How do we visit parents? How do we talk to them? You know the actual classroom environment. How does this teacher act in the classroom? Cause we are kind of trying to marry this program with a typical classroom environment, which isn't so easy. So what does that look like when people do it well? How do they introduce the program to the head teacher? How do they handle disciplinary issues in the classroom? (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, p. 11)

Above all else, the organizations try to remember that the JYEP is a catalyst for capacity building among a population. Carrying out simple acts of service, which can lead to more complex and consistent acts of service, is at the heart of the JYEP. The organizations work with the junior youth to think about the needs of the community while developing service projects that respond to those needs. Sally says:

> Right now what they are doing for service projects is very limited and small but we have confidence that as they get older, and as these concepts, as we study these concepts with them and they get more and more experience, maybe they will do more things for their community. Really, there's this process of building the capacity, the idea is really the organizations that are building, you know, an organization of a few people that builds capacity in hundreds that builds capacity

> in thousands. We have confidence that this whole process will advance through learning you know through all of these things but it's definitely going to take a lot of time. (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, p. 19)

Jane shared Sally's way of thinking about the nature of this process when I asked whether or not she feels the service carried out in the context of the program contributes the material and spiritual development of the community. She says:

> I think that this happens. The answer of course is yes. But it happens little by little. For example, now when you look at the junior youth they start to think about what they can do. Only by little things—like what you said, beautify the environment, helping their parents or even helping their friends to do something, which is helpful. This is very small. They start with very small things. But when they are getting older, I mean, when they are in middle school or high school or even university, I think this transformation will always be with them. ... And when they make decisions or in the future…when they have a career they use the concept or the skills to make decisions about things. (Interview 1, September 14, 2012, p. 7)

Although this process is gradual, Jane was able to illustrate how the program builds capabilities in a population through examples. One of the elements of the program is strengthening a relationship with the teachers and Jane shared a few ways that teachers have noticed changes. The week before my interview, a few of the teachers had raised money for Jane to travel to the school on a regular basis since this is a cost that she normally incurs herself. She also explained that one of the teachers jokingly bragged to a group of co-workers at a dinner party that her students are quite excellent. The teacher

became quiet and then said that her class and students are good, not because of her, but because of the JYEP.

More so than the teachers, the students are deeply affected by the program. Our waitress at dinner (a young girl in her teens) had participated in the program. Jane recalls:

> Another story, which I mention should be about the girl that just came [to the dinner table]. She only participated in the junior youth empowerment program one year. She didn't go to high school because of her family situation. But after many years when I see her, it is not only because I taught her but because she remembers what she had learned from the course. She knows service is not only a word. You should be doing it with your heart, with spirit. Why I say this story is because this program can really release individual capacities and talents. So, this is one thing I think is so amazing. Some of my students, they got the best grades. They go to the best schools. But some of them, they didn't. But after several years when I met them, they feel that when they were studying this course—the course has given them confidence to try and to recognize each of us is rich. I think this is why I said, everyone needs this program.
>
> K: What do you mean by rich?
>
> J: Rich means, like each of us has many talents, but some people if they have the opportunity they can recognize, oh I have many talents and I can try to develop but maybe for some people they couldn't. Even they have, but they couldn't know.
>
> K: And that is poverty?
>
> J: Yes. (Interview 1, September 14, 2012, pp. 4-5)

The most significant way that the program contributes to the development of the community is through the acts of service carried out by the junior youth. These acts of service naturally have an impact on the members of the community. As they witness the efforts of the junior youth, they join with them and become protagonists of their community's well being. Jane describes a few examples:

> Because when we are doing this program, one thing is that we study it at classes, at school. But at the same time, the junior youth themselves read and find out what the needs of the village are. So they do service projects, such as taking care of the elderly – such as cutting hair for them, washing for them, cooking for them and also cleaning the bathroom in the village. So all these service projects, everyone can see in the community. So, sometimes the parents will join.
>
> Each of the villages has a bathroom. Since it was built, no one was cleaning, nobody go and clean. So you can imagine how dirty it is. But after the junior youth start to clean it, even if they are not there, some of the villagers they go and keep it clean. This is how the community is changing.
>
> …The materials that we are using release their capacities, igniting their hearts to think deeply – not only follow shallow things. When they got this understanding—they recognize they have capacities and talents—through guidance because we will go. Not only do they think and plan, but we join. We accompany them. We join them. (Interview 2, September 14, 2012, pp. 8-9)

The CBO is not separate from the community building process but a part of it. All of their efforts to work with the junior youth and carry out acts of service are done shoulder to shoulder with them. Even though these examples are small, they are having

an impact. Jane said that the other day the junior youth were cleaning the toilet in the village and a 70-year-old woman passed by and then she came back after visiting the market. She said to one of the boys, "I think in the future, for sure, you will go to university. Because you are so excellent from a young age and you know how to take care of the community" (Jane, Interview 2, September 14, 2012, p. 9). Although such occurrences are normal, they indicate a process of change that is underway in the village—one that is initiated by eleven to fourteen-year-olds through the assistance of Jane's organization.

Conceptualizing the Program Process

The institutional capacity building process at the Foundation evolves according to a series of stages. Each stage of the program is educational in nature and responds to the needs of the participants. The first stage includes a human resource development seminar; the second stage is the internship, which includes study and practice; the third stage involves the establishment of the CBO in their hometown; the fourth stage includes on-site accompanying and support; and the fifth stage is marked by ongoing support and collaboration. Many of the stages overlap or extend depending on the circumstances. There are a few significant points at which decisions are made and consultations about the way forward are considered.

Stage One: Human Resource Development Seminars

This stage typically includes study and dialogue with groups on development concepts, the identification of suitable individuals and an invitation from the Foundation to apply for an internship. Sally describes this process:

> The initial stage is really the development of human resources. …I think it isn't just a consultative meeting. I would say that it's a series of different activities geared at different populations…it should involve study as well as action. (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, p. 5)

Part of such an approach may involve a 10-day study for some while others may participate in a 10-day study and be asked to carry out a service project in their hometown. The participants are taken through a process that reveals to some degree their characteristics and latent capabilities before being invited to enter the internship stage. Once a few suitable individuals emerge, they are asked to apply for an internship with the Foundation.

Stage Two: Intensive Internship

Stages two and three mark two distinct parts of the internship phase. The first stage consists of 3 to 4 months of study and practice at a CBO that has experience implementing either the EAP or JYEP program. During this time, the participants are introduced to the seven institutional capabilities around which the curriculum is structured. It is important to note that at this point the Foundation has only committed to a 3-month training in a particular program. The participants are aware of the opportunity to start an organization that contributes to social and economic development of the community but they are only at the stage of being trained; the Foundation has not yet committed to working with them. The study focuses on a diversity of elements related to the establishment of an organization, as explained by Sally:

> And we first give them, in this initial period, we always do emphasize that they are going back to start their own organization. They also look at the organizational elements. The development of human resources, the use of

> financial resources, the formality of the organization, coming to work every day. It sounds silly, but it's important. (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, p. 7)

During this training, Sally says, "You see the seeds of various things that come out later" (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, p. 12). Unlike the first stage in which they have an initial and rather superficial introduction to the candidates, the training enables them to see the participants at a much greater depth. Following the study and practice, the candidate and the Foundation consult about whether or not they would like to continue with the internship. At this point, both the Foundation and/or the candidate can decide whether or not they would like to begin an organization.

Stage Three: Establishment of the CBO in the First Year

Stage three marks the second stage of the internship in which they establish the organization. Individuals ideally go back to their hometowns and the Foundation supports them to both establish the organization and implement either the JYEP or EAP. At this point, the individuals read the reality of their hometown, engage in an initial investigation, and create a plan of action and corresponding budget, which includes an application for funding. At this point, the role of the Foundation is indispensable. A staff member of the Foundation will go with the individual beginning an organization and will spend a great deal of time with them to accompany them in practice to implement the program and establish the organization. Not only do they focus on starting the organization but they also strive to translate the capabilities studied in stage two into action and take concrete concepts that have been conceived in abstraction up until that point. Sally remarks:

> In this stage, the focus of course is really on working together in whatever locality they are planning to do this in and working together in a way that it gets the program established and helps them in forming certain understandings and habits that they will carry with them going forward. Although at this stage, again, even though we're focused on implementation, this understanding of concepts is still very important. (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, p. 15)

During this stage, the organization is supported quite practically by the Foundation to develop institutional capabilities that will serve them throughout the years. On an ongoing basis throughout this initial year, the staff member of the Foundation visits and lends support. Sally explains that the staff member

> goes and really visits that person regularly and works with them to really move forward their organization. It depends on the individual, their needs, you know, it's probably once every two to six months that someone will go and spend several days with the organization and really carry out a number of activities aimed at moving the organization from whatever stage it's in to another stage. It could include studying materials with them, maybe they realize needs related to the program or institutional capabilities that could be doing things with them—visiting government officials, visiting schools, trying to start trainings, attending trainings… there is something to be said just for being with the person in the field. You know, their love of the work and at the same time you assess what are the needs and you try to help move that organization forward. (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, p. 14)

The Foundation has a team of people who visit organizations and supports them in their efforts to contribute to their communities. This team is familiar with the JYEP and EAP program as well as the institutional capabilities. The Foundation assigns the team on a regional basis to visit and support organizations depending on their needs. Upon the initial implementation of the organization, an individual from this team spends a few months with them. Sally suggested that this is a part of the process where they establish a relationship in which they are working together as collaborators:

> Our experience is that, again, the beginning is important and people are different. Some you don't have to do much and they go and do these amazing things and other people they really need more help walking, someone walking with them. Everybody needs accompaniment. Everybody does. And people want help. They don't want to be just ignored and left alone. They want someone to be there. So we really emphasize that these are their own organizations but they are not doing it alone. We are there for them. I think, again, the beginning is very important. … We will go and spend a lot of time with them on the ground. And again like in everything that we do, we focus, although this part is really focused heavily on implementation. Now you know this program, you understand it so let's go out and let's really do, you know, do things together and get it established. (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, p. 14)

The Foundation offers continuous and supportive accompanying in practice to the organizations. One of the most important areas of accompanying that an organization engages in during this time is the conscious effort to put institutional capabilities into

practice. Jane explained how her organization learned to develop the institutional capability of reading reality upon returning to her hometown:

> First of all, I said when I came back, I finished the training and came back. Of course, I should learn to choose where to present this program, yeah. Yeah so you should read the culture of this place, recognize the people who are interested with you or this I think all this together…the more you read the reality of the society, not only the needs, but also the reality outside, the more you can work with it. This is one thing. And when the CBOS are step by step developing because all of these capacities we are learning and trying to develop. Through trying we learn more. So we also need time. (Interview 3, September 15, 2012, p. 16)

In my conversations with Jane, she told the story of how challenging it was for her to start her organization in a rural community. She explained to me that it was difficult to find open-minded people to consider the program. For the first year she only worked with ten junior youth in two separate groups, neither of which were in the schools. In order to get into the schools, she would meet with the head master and do a demo class. She explains that she

> visited several schools in the city. Some in the city and some out of the city. I think altogether it would be 20 or 25 middle schools. For five of them, I had demo classes. I would talk to the headmaster and he says, ok, you can have a demo class to show us. Of course, they discuss, but after that time it was not so easy…well finally, finally, finally, I got one. The first school I had was "her" school. The girl I was telling you about. (Interview 1, September 14, 2012, p. 6)

After her first year at the school, the program had a big impact on the students. Jane explained to me that the headmaster said:

> "I have been teaching more than 20 years, I have never seen this kind of thing in my life." When I left the school, the students were crying and came to the bus, around the bus. So, he saw that part also. That was how it started. (Interview 1, September 14, 2012, p. 7)

Jane felt that her ability to begin and establish the organization was largely due to the support given to her by the Foundation. She talks about the early stages of the organization with fondness:

> I think as a CBO, when you come back as an individual then little by little you set up an NGO or CBO, all this time you cannot do it by yourself. In this situation, the Foundation plays a very important role. This is what I understand. So like for us, if we go and visit officials, we would like them to join because they have more experiences and a bigger picture of…policy or plans, you know what I mean. Like mainly this kind of things, we help each other and they help the CBOS. (Interview 3, September 15, 2012, p. 12)

The organization and the Foundation work together as collaborators. The initial stage of the implementation of the organization is a period of time in which they collaborate quite closely. Since this time, the Foundation has been with Jane every step of the way and she is now working with more than 400 junior youth in three schools and multiple villages.

Stage Four: Additional Years of Training and Support

In stage four, the CBOs have been in operation for some time and have partnerships with schools. Nevertheless, the organizations still receive ongoing on-site training and accompanying with respect to program implementation and institutional capacity. A critical element of the program process includes the ongoing accompanying of the organizations by the staff of the Foundation. Typically, accompanying is understood as on-site support. It is carried out in the context of fellowship and trust.

During this time, the organizations also participate in seminars held by the Foundation. The organization continues to grow and advance according to the opportunities before it and the efforts exerted. Jane describes the organic evolution of her organization over time:

> So, each year, the following year, you learn more compare with before. No matter with quality or quantity…I think because kind of I'm like a teacher. So, maybe first year, I think, I am only a teacher. Then I recognize, it's not easy to be a good teacher [laughs]. Then, yeah, so for now what we are thinking is, of course as a CBO we exist here but the thing is, we should work with more people. Even, we hope with everyone in the community.
>
> So, when you teach or cooperate with schools little by little you know how to help the junior youth have a clear transformation. This is one thing we learn and it's getting deeper and deeper. Another thing is as a CBO you try to develop every member's understanding. Number three is as a CBO you are not only working with your students, actually you are working with a whole community. I think, these three, according to different stages, like what you said, you learn, you

> have different ideas and different pictures. Of course, a different vision. (Interview 2, September 14, 2012, p. 7)

Stage Five: Ongoing Partnership and Support

The final stage requires less input from the Foundation as the organization matures and evolves into one that has developed many capabilities. Partnership and support normally takes the form of the organizations' participation in regional and national seminars on themes related to institutional capacity building and development.

In Sally's explanation of the stages of institutional capacity building, she was always hesitant to say "this is how it is" or "this is how we do it" since the Foundation is always in a mode of learning. She explained that the structure of the 3-month training, the elements that they include and the distinct stages are all a part of what they are learning how to do. Sally explains:

> Yeah, I have to really put a caveat…everything that I am saying to you is not like, ok we have formulated this stage and here's how we do it every single time. Its here's how we are doing it now based on what we learned, based on all the mistakes we've made and all the successes that we have had. And you know we are saying, we have a 3-month training with these elements but maybe in a year from now we will have a different, we will have a 6-month training and it will probably be similar, but… you see what I mean? Everything that I am saying right now is really a snapshot, in terms of the learning that we are in, because this really is a very new program. And so it is hard to kind of draw any conclusions. (Sally, Interview 1, p. 7)

Figure 1 captures succinctly the program process on a graph based on a representation created by the Foundation (2012) in "Releasing Potential."

Figure 1. Stages of the program process practiced by the ICBP.

Conceptualizing the Role of Learning *With* Others

Two concepts that are fundamental to the Foundation's endeavours include serving others in a learning mode and accompanying others on their paths of service. The capability to accompany and support others in their efforts is inseparable from a learning-centred orientation. Such a capability requires the development of certain qualities, habits, and attitudes and forms the basis upon which friendship is built. The Foundation and the CBOs accompany one another as they walk together on a path of learning.

The process of learning for each organization advances according to distinct stages of development. From the outset, learning takes place in the context of spaces for studying and the exploration of concepts applicable to action. The initial study, which considers candidates for starting an organization, is centred on development. Before the organization is established, the study evolves in consideration of institutional capabilities. Once the organization is in operation, learning continues to take place in ongoing seminars with other organizations that the Foundation works alongside. Learning is crystallized as the candidates visit and learn from other organizations that have garnered a degree of experience in the field of action. Organizations regularly receive visits from the Foundation's staff and/or are encouraged by the Foundation to visit specific organizations to learn from a particular strength.

Learning is a dynamic process that takes place in a variety of contexts and includes both study and action. Sally explained that what they study and what they see is very important for the ongoing learning of their organization:

> Many values, many habits, many understandings are imparted to them not only through study but also through what they see. So we really try to give a very good

> training at this stage and really to expose them to positive kind of models of organizations. So luckily we have some very, very good ones. And it's very inspiring to them because when they visit these small organizations, they see other people just like them who have done what they now are planning to do, they have struggled, they have gone through various challenges but they have done it. They are very inspired, they go back and it really is a wonderful example to them and they can really start right away doing things. (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, p. 7)

Visiting during this initial stage provides a rich space in which they learn what to do and what not to do through what they see. It is conveyed not in the form of teaching but learning from an organization like their own. The way their learning advances during this initial period is dependent on a variety of circumstances. Normally the foundation assists them quite closely while they establish their organization. They visit them and work with them very closely for one year. The Foundation and the organizations try to develop a shared vision and move forward together. Sally explains:

> We have a vision of how these organizations can develop. For example, this woman who is working with two schools, we know she can work with seventeen. We have this vision, she has this vision too. We impart the vision, she's excited about it, we're excited about it…and some organizations will never get to that size. That's fine. But I think that then we have to do things to support them based on their needs. It's not a theoretical exercise. When you visit, you really see commonalities. You see that people have the same challenges. (Interview 2, September 11, 2012, p. 22)

Their support and accompanying of the organizations is based both on needs and a vision of what the organization can do. Support may be greater in some circumstances and less in others. Nevertheless, all of the organizations are supported on the basis of concrete knowledge and experience on the ground. Since the Foundation works with all of them, they provide spaces to benefit from and share learning. When I asked Sally how the Foundation and organizations learn together, her answer was multifaceted:

> I think that we do various things, we visit them, we see what they need, we study with them, and we visit them. Particularly me, because I visit all of them, you tend to see commonalities. You tend to see that people are missing the same things or they are doing well at the same things and on the basis of those commonalities you might bring groups together in a seminar where they can share learning together. You might write some material, you know or pull some previous material that you have studied previously and go and study it with them. You know what I mean? Individually or at a seminar. You might just assign someone to go and spend 2 weeks with them. You know there was one organization that was having a lot of trouble and we sent someone there for a month and that person was really able to work with them and now they are doing really well. Or sometimes you send them to each other now. One thing we have started doing is, particularly, you know it's so helpful just to see right. So sometimes when an organization has a certain strength where others are weak, we say look go spend a week at this organization. And we make a list with them of all the things that they want to observe and all the questions that they want to ask and it can really be very you know helpful for them and we see a big jump after that

> happens. You know, anytime there is a seminar or a visit somewhere. (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, pp. 22-23)

Sally said that the Foundation's emphasis on learning with others, through an encounter with reality in the context of visits, seminars, and daily interactions enables them to capture collective learning and convey this experience through the staff at the Foundation with the "same voice." She explains when they visit organizations, "we will say the same things or we will see the same things do you know what I mean because it is or it's not just personal experience, it's collective experience, but it's also, it's really just a consultation" (Interview 2, September 11, 2012, p. 16).

After someone from the Foundation visits an organization, they share informal notes with the rest of the individuals at the Foundation and they convey their learning and experiences with the organization at weekly meetings held by the Foundation. Internally, they share learning on a regular basis regarding what is being experienced in the field. This learning is also considered in the writing of the curriculum and the planning of content for seminars.

During my second interview with Sally, I was assisted to learn something very important. For some reason, I viewed the educational process as one in which the Foundation assisted the organizations to learn from the experience accumulated by them. Sally lovingly corrected this misunderstanding. She said:

> It's not that you know for example when we go and visit an organization that it's like … [the] Foundation goes and visits. It's really where we are with them and thinking together about how can we develop this organization. …We can share what are our ideas and what are our thoughts, you know what I mean. It really

> occurs as a consultation between two people with this common goal of furthering this thing. (Interview 2, September 11, 2012, p. 16)

In this way, learning cannot be directed by what the Foundation thinks is best for the organizations. Instead the Foundation and the organizations accompany one another as they tread a path of service. When I was speaking with Jane, she suggested that the Foundation is continually involved in what the organization is learning through regular visits or even daily phone conversations:

> But of course [the Foundation] has more experiences and they have been doing this a lot of years. So, of course, during these early stages, more CBOs need guidance or help. So we still have a close relationship with each other…when the CBO needs, they give support. Of course, it includes guidance sometimes. They don't make decisions for the CBOs. Another thing is what the CBO learns, we will share with them. Like, for her [points to a woman from the Foundation], she is not always here but she knows what's going on.
>
> I actually can say it is systematic, which means it's not suddenly, uh? We have this system—we share, we reflect, we visit each other and we say things together. Another thing is through seminar or when we come for visiting, we share—they share what they thought and we share what we do here and what were the results. So I think from this point we put vision and action together. (Interview 3, September 15, 2012, pp. 11-12)

In this context, knowledge generation is constructed with the Foundation and the organizations as collaborators in a process of learning. From this perspective, the Foundation does not assume to be the "knowers" while the organizations are the

"learners." Instead they are learning together as equals. The Foundation, however, has the opportunity to work with many organizations and has the benefit of generating a breadth of experience as a result of their interactions with multiple organizations.

Notwithstanding their commitment to this orientation, there are many subtly dichotomous ways of thinking that influence approaches to learning with others. One such limitation is the dichotomy of "us" and "them" which is commonplace in development efforts. Freire (1970) discusses this ever-present dichotomy as it relates to dialogue. He explains that naming the world cannot be an "act of ignorance," but must involve humility. Dialogue is the encounter of those involved in a common task of learning and acting:

> How can I dialogue if I always project ignorance onto others and never perceive my own? How can I dialogue if I regard myself as a case apart from others—mere "its" in whom I cannot recognize other "I"s? How can I dialogue if I consider myself a member of the in-group of pure men, the owners of truth and knowledge, for whom all non-members are "these people" or "the great unwashed"? How can I dialogue if I start from the premise that naming the world is the task of an elite and that the presence of the people in history is a sign of deterioration, thus to be avoided? How can I dialogue if I am closed to—and even offended by—the contribution of others? How can I dialogue if I am afraid of being displaced, the mere possibility causing me torment and weakness? Self sufficiency is incompatible with dialogue. Men and women who lack humility (or have lost it) cannot come to the people, cannot be their partners in naming the world. Someone who cannot acknowledge himself to be as mortal as everyone else still has a long way to go before he can reach the point of encounter. At the point of encounter there are neither utter ignoramuses nor

> perfect sages; there are only people who are attempting, together, to learn more than they now know. (Freire, 1970, p. 90)

From my perspective, both Sally and Jane were rid of this dichotomous way of thinking and even assisted me to critically question it in myself. They spoke about the organizations they serve with such love and showed such a commitment to learning with them that I felt no trace of "us" and "them" in their interactions. This way of viewing the educational process is summed up in this statement by Freire (1970):

> Authentic education is not carried on by "A" *for* "B" or by "A" *about* "B," but rather by "A" *with* "B," mediated by the world—a world which impresses and challenges both parties, giving rise to views or opinions about it. (p. 93)

The concept of doing things *with* one another, mediated by the world was echoed in their constant focus on carrying out activities *together* even though they are part of distinct agencies. Sally explains that, "Everything we do is educational and it's just as educational for us as it is for them." The orientation of learning while abandoning the tendency to think in terms of right vs. wrong is what enables them to work as collaborators. Sally reiterates:

> So really I think that this educational process is us and them together. You know? And we are there from one angle. We have sight of all 22 and they are there on the ground doing what they are doing. And all of us are in this process of generating knowledge. We work with them and we study together and we learn, concepts become more clear to us over time and how to work becomes more clear over time. (Interview 2, September 11, 2012, p. 6)

Although they view reality from slightly different angles, they share their perspective with one another to enrich what the other sees within an overarching framework. Learning within this framework is concerned with releasing potential of institutions to contribute to the community that they serve. The humble nature of their interaction fosters progress as Sally explains:

> What we are trying to do is release potential in these institutions. You know, we serve [organizations]. And they serve the community. We don't put ourselves up, we put ourselves down. And then the process that we are going through, whether it is conversations, whether it's writing things down, whether its studying or bringing groups together or doing things with them, or going with them to their schools, going to organizations. You know all of it, is our instrument that we use to achieve this vision, to release this potential of this kind of service to society. So it has this, the education is there for this other. … We calibrate it all the time to see kind of what will conduce to the releasing of this potential. (Interview 2, September 11, 2012, p. 7)

Conceptualizing the Scope of Action and Reflection on Action

The generation of knowledge has implications not only for an organization's view of the nature of development but also for their methodology. Endeavours are pursued in a mode of learning from action. Such a process is characterized by action, reflection, consultation, and study. In this setting, strategies are re-examined, lessons learned, obstacles removed, and modifications are made. Such approaches avoid haphazard action and continuity of action is maintained.

Learning is at the heart of the all the efforts pursued by the Foundation. It is both a methodology and an approach to action. The Foundation (2012) describes how such an approach directs their endeavours:

> Programs that operate in a learning mode avoid the tendency to make and implement grand plans, and instead start with action on a relatively small scale on the basis of certain well-defined principles and a common vision. Reflection on the results of the initial action yield information leading to adjustment in strategy and approach, which can then serve as a foundation for additional action. As experience is gained and methods emerge through experience, programs can expand in both size and complexity. (p. 5)

Learning moves forward as the Foundation acts, reflects on that action in light of experience, studies materials generated from action, and then creates short- and long-terms plans. All action is pursued within a conceptual framework within which they operate. Sally explains how this framework shapes their efforts to generate experience:

> We are always trying to generate experience. It doesn't matter if that experience is bad or good in a way. I mean we can't go so bad because there is a framework that we are operating on. As time has gone on, I have been here about 6 years, what I have seen is…if you do less, it's better than doing more in the wrong direction. Do you know what I mean? So we have to be very clear with our conceptual framework. We have to be 100% clear with our vision, our conceptual framework. And then on the basis of that conceptual framework and whatever we have been talking about doing, we generate experience and we do stuff. And then

> it is through experience generation that we learn. (Interview 2, September 11, 2012, p. 8)

All actions are carried out within a conceptual framework that shapes the space within which they work. Action is considered in light of that framework and experience generated also changes the nature of the framework. Such an approach fosters ongoing and continuous progress. Reflecting on action enables participants to avoid the tendency to think in terms of right and wrong but following a path of learning that opens up new directions. Reflecting on experience within a framework ensures that weaknesses turn into strengths and actions are adjusted. Consultation, action, reflection on action, is not a linear process but a methodology that guides its endeavours. In this way, the Foundation avoids a mechanistic approach that has a set of steps that are carried out in order. Instead, an organic process evolves according to the needs and a growing capacity of participants to act. This influences how the Foundation views an organization itself. Sally says:

> It's an interesting thing that I feel that an organization is really an organism. It's an organic entity and it, it actually, it's more like tending a plant or pruning a tree than deciding okay this, the process, this is the structure. (Interview 2, September 11, 2012, p. 18)

Conceptualizing the Role of the Foundation in Synthesizing and Sharing Learning

As mentioned earlier, the organization's approach is guided by the principle of universal participation. The program that is employed is the junior youth empowerment program, but such a program embraces the families and siblings of the junior youth of the entire community. It sets in motion a process within a growing group of participants in a

collective to learn about the material and spiritual development of their community. Such a process has, at its core, an approach to development which views the generation and application of knowledge as the main force that advances society.

At the beginning, generating new knowledge is conceived of as insights that emerge through practical experience. The Foundation's role in systematizing knowledge can include drawing on lessons learned through stories, anecdotes, or personal reflections. Common patterns emerge as experience accrues. The Foundation captures and documents the emergence of patterns in documents and shares it with organizations in the context of visits or seminars, which further influences action. Curriculum or study of the materials is therefore based on the aspirations and experiences of the participants involved. The Foundation views its role as systematizing learning generated by a growing group of individuals for the betterment of their communities. The process of systematizing and capturing knowledge is illustrated in Figure 2.

The Foundation strives to release the potential of the organizations with which they collaborate and the organizations strive to release the potential of the community that they serve. Beyond this, the Foundation also works with a network of organizations and in this context, they have the unique role of systematizing learning and sharing it with the grassroots. Since the Foundation visits the organizations on a regular basis, they develop a depth and breadth of vision based on diverse experiences. Sally spoke about how they have to be careful to avoid the "trap what you see is all there is. Because there are many things you don't see" (Interview 2, September 11, 2012, p. 23). The role of the Foundation in synthesizing and sharing learning does not negate the development of an organization's capability to read reality. In fact, sharing learning generated from a

network of organizations sheds light on the decisions made by organizations that are striving to read and understand the reality of the community they serve. Sally elaborates:

> One of the reasons these organizations are independent is because we don't tell them what to do. We share learning with them and they make a decision because it's very important that people have to read their own reality, assess their own resources and make their own decisions. It's very, very critical. However, with that said, the act of going to all of these different places and seeing what's happening on the ground, you get a very rich and broad perspective from doing that. You really in some ways, know an organization better than it knows itself. You have such a unique perspective, you have bird's eye view…you see the commonalities, you see the distinctions. You know all of these things and then we learn. And our role isn't to tell people what to do or to direct them or shoot off our opinions but to share our learning and there are various instruments through which we can share the learning. (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, p. 23)

The Foundation utilizes instruments that channel knowledge that has been generated by the network of organizations working towards the same aim. There are constant flows of information from the organizations to the Foundation. In my conversations with Sally, she described five instruments that the Foundation has learned to use at this particular point in their evolution. Sally gives us a picture of the first instrument:

> So one is visiting. We visit and we share with them our learning about what has worked in other places or what they might try and through consultation, you

> know and we try, I mean sometimes we might say you could try this and your could try that. You know, because it's a conversation, and often our suggestions are based on our learning. Here's what we have seen and here's what you could try next. You are having this challenge, you could do this or that. You know I think this is based on our learning. So these visits and doing things together and consulting with them and is one instrument. (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, p. 24)

Beyond making regular visits to the organizations, the Foundation is constantly interacting with them on the phone and through email. The act of going and working together in the field dissolves the emergence of a sentiment of the 'other' and enables the Foundation and organizations to works as partners. In this context, they are thinking critically together about how they move the organization forward. Thinking, "which perceives reality as a process, as transformation, rather than as a static entity—thinking which does not separate itself from action" (Freire, 1970, p. 93).

Engaging in a process of thinking and acting together enables them to advance further in a learning process. As Freire (1970) states,

> the object of action is the reality to be transformed by them together with other people—not other men and women themselves. The oppressors are the ones who act upon the people to indoctrinate them and adjust them to a reality which must remain untouched. (p. 93)

The Foundation avoids the tendency to indoctrinate or force the organizations to learn by visiting and being with them in the field and sharing learning as circumstances dictate.

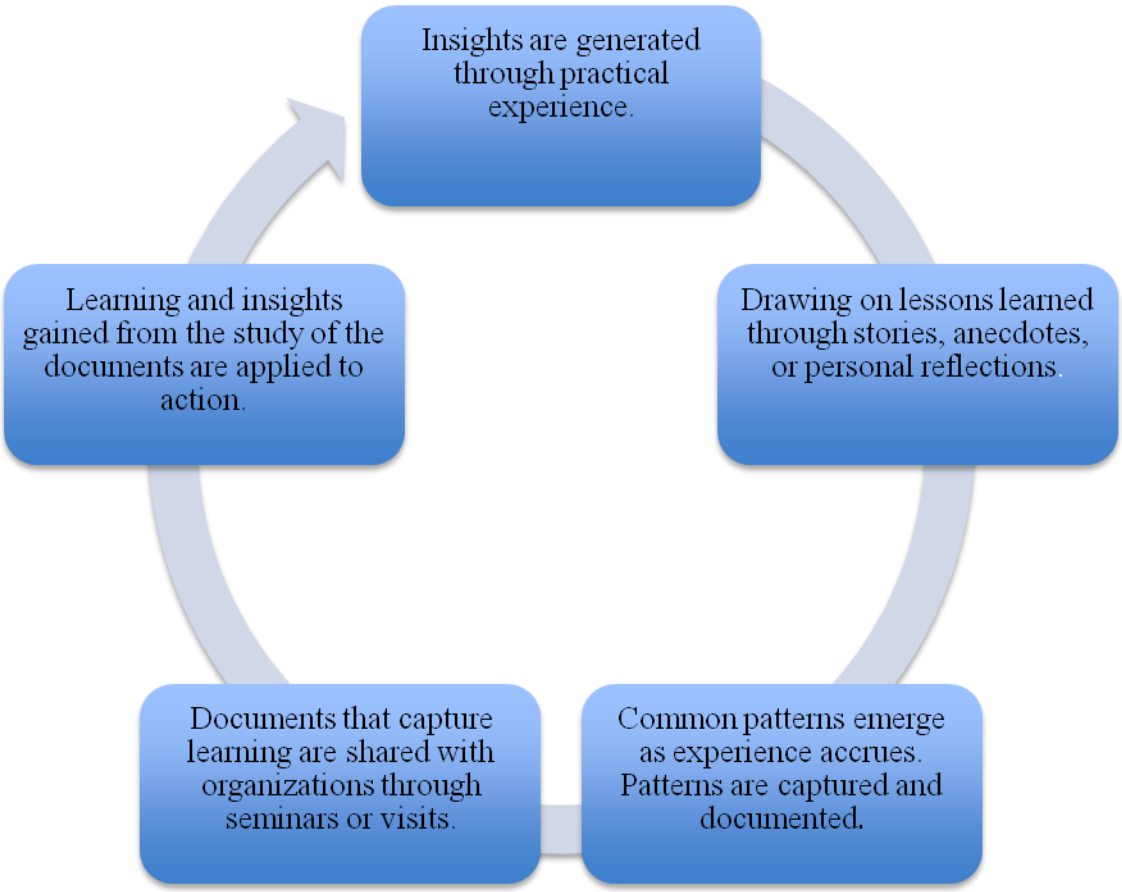

Figure 2: The process of systematizing and capturing learning

In many educational contexts, educators often opt for support of the people by offering program content from the top down. The Foundation avoids this tendency in the approach employed to writing curriculum. Curriculum is conceptualized as a means through which learning is captured and shared. Sally simply describes how they understand the process of writing curriculum: "We take our experience and we synthesize it into things that we write and we share, you know and over time those develop into more formal courses" (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, p. 24). Sally describes the second instrument in detail:

> I think another instrument is the materials that we write. So for example, with our EAP organizations we saw that there was a challenge with respect to the accompaniment of the participants once they completed the training. So we kind of wrote some things based on you know, accompanying people. It was based on what the successful organizations had done. It wasn't just theoretical. It was really like, ok we have a few organizations that are doing it really well and some that aren't so we took that experience and we sort of distilled it into introducing it into the idea of accompanying the program. The program is designed to build the capacity for people to do these projects at a conceptual level and we gave examples of different kinds of projects and now we are starting to study it with them. And I think that material is a very good example of sharing our learning because sometimes it isn't enough to go and say things. Sometimes you go around and have ten conversations and you end up putting that conversation into material. And the material is deeper. You don't always talk about concepts the same way

> you do in material; you know it would be strange. Then I think, those materials make a big difference and we go back to them again and again. Then the study of the material is important. (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, p. 24)

Sharing learning through the materials enables organizations to consider their own reality and reflect on what is being shared in the curriculum itself. Freire (1970) asserts that an education program that fails to respect the view of the world held by the people will not produce lasting results; instead, "the starting point for organizing the program content…must be the present, existential, concrete situation, reflecting the aspirations of the people" (p. 95). The Foundation strives to accomplish this by writing curriculum based on the experience of the organizations themselves. Speaking generally about curriculum, Freire asserts that:

> For the dialogical, problem-posing teacher-student, the program content of education is neither a gift or an imposition—bits of information to be deposited in the students—but rather the organized, systematized, and developed "re-presentation" to individuals of the things about which they want to know more. (p. 93)

Studying materials that are based on the experience of the organizations enables them to reflect on that learning as a result of their experience. The organizations apply what they are able to in light of their reading of reality. In addition to utilizing material to foster growth, the Foundation also facilitates learning through other means. Sally describes the third instrument:

> We facilitate learning horizontally. You know, horizontal learning. We bring them to a seminar with many agencies together and then we get them to share

> their learning. So for example how do you bring and introduce the program to villagers and establish trainings? How do you get them to systematically study a text to completion, not just study when they want to and don't study when they want to? And they share with each other and they love it. And we also are sitting there asking questions. It really is like, we are collaborating with them, do you know what I mean? We are collaborators in the generation of knowledge. And so. It's not like we have all the learning and they don't. (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, p. 24)

Instrument three is based on idea that the Foundation does not always have to mediate learning in order for it to occur. In reality, the Foundation brings organizations together to create a space in which the organizations can share their learning together. This is done in the context of seminars but it also happens through visits to other organizations.

The space of the seminar allows for the free and open exchange of ideas, challenges and strengths. Such a dialogue draws out experiences and enables others to reflect on their own reality in light of the experiences shared by others. Coming together in a small group to study or talk about experiences fosters a spirit of fellowship among the organizations and enables them to return home refreshed and energized. It also provides an alternative to regular visits and exchanges that come from the Foundation. Instead they feel excited to be together and to learn from one another. In these settings, the Foundation facilitates a natural exchange of learning. The fourth instrument is connected to the third instrument. Sally continues:

> And then we have started this other instrument of visits from one CBO to another. Which is very good. You know because it helps them, they share with each other and the one organization goes, the other organization is very happy and goes back. You know like sometimes you just need to energize them a little bit. Sometimes things can be a little bit discouraging when you go on and on without anything like that you start to feel. … It wears on you and you need something to pick you up. (Interview 1, September 11, 2012, p. 25)

This instrument enables the visiting organizations to learn directly from experience on the ground. It strengthens resolve and energizes participants by learning from the approach of others. Oftentimes, the Foundation sends organizations for a visit in order to learn a particular thing. The Foundation fosters learning by assisting the visiting organization to create a series of questions that can organize their learning. This approach enables the organizations to feel like they are a part of something greater than themselves.

Conclusion

In Chapter 4, I have drawn on the stories and experiences shared by Jane and Sally in my interviews with them. Their insights and rich experiences have coalesced into themes including the role of institutions as instruments for a larger process, the program process, the elements of a methodology and characteristics of ICB and the dynamics of a learning process associated with ICB.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

In Chapter 1, I set out to learn about a learning process associated with building capacity in institutions for the betterment of their communities. As such, I argued that little to no research has examined the nature of the learning process that builds capacity in institutions. The majority of training programs focus on capacity building for individuals and communities. Nevertheless, Chapman and Kirk (2001) argue that organizations play a significant role in individual and community change, yet efforts to train and build capacity in organizations occur too late. With such a lack of research on training programs for CBOs, I set out to ask many questions that would begin a process of learning about education for institutional capacity building. My goal was never to assume that the Foundation under study had concrete answers to my questions but I expected that some of their experiences with ICB would provide a starting point to learn.

The instigation of this study came from a desire to learn about the ICBP curriculum, which is designed around seven capabilities; to learn how CBOs are identified and assisted by the Foundation through an internship to implement a program and establish an organization; to discover the nature of the collaborative and reciprocal learning process between the Foundation and each CBO; and to understand the impact of the actions taken by the CBO on communities through the EAP and JYEP. Although the interviews gave me insights into the first three elements, the final question appeared to be premature. The efforts of the CBOs are just beginning to have an impact on the community and those experiences were conveyed in my research through stories.

During my visit to the Foundation and CBO—placed in a different social and cultural setting as an outsider—I felt as though I was among friends. Notwithstanding the

experiential divide that separated us, our shared learning to implement the junior youth empowerment program, our similar experiences and our religious identity enabled us find common ground. At times, I felt as though I was a stranger in a foreign land but our conversations and my strong desire to learn from their experience, brought us together. In my interviews with Sally and Jane, I was overwhelmed by their humble approach to their service and their disposition to prioritize learning above all else.

I left feeling as though I wanted to spend more time with them to benefit from their breadth of knowledge about ICB. Each time I spoke with them, I replayed our conversation in my mind and my search for knowledge was driven by continuous desire to find answers to questions. What they had to offer was much more than what I was prepared to study. My gratitude to Jane and Sally and my hope for what they will do is endless. I only hope that some of the learning captured in this study might be of benefit to others carrying out ICB for community change.

Summary of Findings

In this section, I will summarize some of the key findings that emerged out of the data in this study. In order to do this, I will highlight nine main points that I argue will shed light on the four questions posed above and more specifically the nature of institutional capacity building and the learning process associated with it. Theoretical and practical implications will follow each finding.

Point 1

"Institutional capacity building should be centred on the generation, application, diffusion of knowledge for the development of individuals and communities." The role of knowledge in development efforts cannot be underestimated. The generation of

knowledge is pursued by the organizations and the Foundation as collaborators in a learning process. Learning advances through a process of action, reflection on action, dialogue and study. The application of knowledge to the life of the community is the responsibility of each individual but it is synthesized, captured and shared back to the community through institutions.

The centrality of the generation, application, and diffusion of knowledge to ICB implies that community-based organization abandon the tendency to view their work as a series of services to be offered to the community for their benefit. Instead knowledge generation spurs participation in a growing group of individuals to take responsibility for community change.

Point 2

"Institutional capacity building should be based on core concepts and principles that make up a conceptual framework, which reinforce and guide the lines of action pursued by an organization." Core concepts include a realization that development efforts should consider the coherence between material and spiritual aspects of reality; the unique role of knowledge generation; upholding the role of increasing participation in individuals and communities to become protagonists in their own development; increasing capacity in a growing group of people to engage in a process of learning about development; participation in decision-making as an integral aspect of the empowerment process; learning as a posture and a methodology; and the forging of structures that facilitate learning.

In a community setting, multiple organizations pursue divergent objectives for community change. The construction of concepts and principles that guide lines of action

of a cohort of CBOs will provide a common and shared framework in which to collaborate. Such a framework will enable organizations working within a community to advance together by employing a shared vocabulary and vision of growth for the future.

Point 3

"The ICB process evolves according to a series of stages that facilitate the growth of an institution over time." It includes human resource development—which is comprised of study and dialogue on development—and an invitation from the Foundation to apply for an internship; the first stage of the internship includes a three to four month period of study that includes a focus on institutional capabilities and implementation of the JYEP or EAP at an experienced organization; the second part of the internship includes the establishment of the CBO in the first year; additional years of training and support through accompanying the staff at the Foundation; and ongoing partnership and support through participation in seminar. The stages advance according to the growing capacity of the organization. The Foundation accompanies the organization on-site on a regular basis.

The tendency to train community-based organizations according to a series of techniques and strategies will create superficial and temporary change. Instead, the evolution of institutional capacity according to a series of stages with the accompaniment of a more experienced Foundation will provide long-lasting support and ongoing transformation for individuals and communities.

Point 4

"Human resource development for CBOs can be conceived of as a series of activities that seek to build capacity in individuals that form part of an institution while

simultaneously fostering institutional capabilities." A unique aspect of the ICBP is the fact that the Foundation takes human resources through an ongoing process that involves the identification of human resources to start an organization; training human resources in the context of an internship; assistance of human resources to establish an organization and implement a program and; continued collaboration and training of human resources in the long-term. Such commitment to working with others is motivated by a desire to serve others and help them grow through service. The characteristics of individuals inclined to serve institutions are many, but some that have proven helpful include a learning attitude, a service orientation, the ability to see potential in others and the ability to work independently.

Institutional capabilities are developed as individuals are identified to work with institutions that are characterized by certain qualities, attitudes and habits. Any focus on institutional capacity building will fail without due attention to the development of human resources. Human resource development is inseparable from institutional capacity building and therefore an educational process for community change must build capacity in both individuals and institutions.

Point 5

"Any educational curriculum concerned with institutional capacity building includes both theoretical components and elements that emerge out of practical experience and should consider: the nature of development; core concepts and principles that form part of a conceptual framework for social action; and a consideration of institutional capabilities." The curriculum could be organized around core and periphery

institutional capabilities that contribute to society. The development of institutional capabilities advances through study, dialogue and action.

Training that seeks to build capacity in institutions should be organized according to capabilities for service to the community. An institution requires the ability to read society, to develop and manage financial resources, raise up and deploy human resources, and develop additional operational capabilities. Therefore training for institutions should focus on the development of capabilities that enable institutions to serve the individual and community at higher levels. Foundations that collaborate with institutions should avoid the tendency to view training as the development technical skills and approaches but rather, they should view such work as building capacity within institutions to contribute to the betterment of society.

Point 6

"Both the Foundation and the organizations play a significant role in synthesizing and sharing learning." The educational content is pursued in the context of generating new knowledge for the betterment of society. The organizations pursue a learning process with a growing group of individuals in the community and the Foundation does so with the organizations they serve. At the beginning, generating new knowledge is understood as insights that emerge through practical experience. The Foundation's efforts to systematize learning including drawing on lessons learned through stories or reflections, which emerge as a pattern that is captured in documents. These documents are shared through seminars, visits, and group studies. The reflection on the documents translates into changes in action. This is an approach to writing curriculum that takes place over many years.

Content and structure is shaped by experience generated by the organization and the foundation as collaborators. Generating new knowledge is tied to service to the community. The Foundation, as an organization with more experience, plays the indispensable role of synthesizing and sharing learning with all the organizations that they assist.

Point 7

"Ongoing training offered by the Foundation advances understanding around common concepts that foster collaboration among likeminded CBOs." Within community development, organizations face challenges in dialogue due to the fact that they don't come from a common foundation. Training such as this for CBOs would not only contribute to their ability to function with greater effectiveness but would also foster a common understanding based on shared concepts that would permit them to collaborate and work together for the betterment of the community.

Organizations often struggle to collaborate with members of their own organizations and are hard-pressed to collaborate with other organizations. Ongoing seminars held by the Foundation provide a space to explore common concepts that enable organizations to have a framework through which they act. The Foundation not only establishes organizations but also plays a unique role in fostering collaboration among a growing group of organizations charged with the same purpose. Such a learning environment is dynamic and rich because the teaching-learning experience is not vertical in nature but learning is shared horizontally. Organizations convey their learning to one another and reflect on experience through open and free flowing dialogue. The space of the seminar is fostered and facilitated by the Foundation.

Point 8

"The process of institutional capacity building is reinforced through an ongoing effort to serve others in a mode of learning and accompaniment." An institution whose purpose is to release capacity within the individual to act and facilitate collective action should attempt to serve others in a learning mode and accompany others on their paths of service. A mode of accompaniment of others is reinforced by a disposition to learn.

Capacity building is stifled in environments that are assailed by certain habits of thought. Habits of thought that conflict with acting in a mode of learning and accompaniment are abundant and the need to counteract them are critical. Certain habits in thinking include the belief that the "developed" need to work with the "undeveloped," that some "know" and others "learn," that multiple, disconnected, and uncoordinated activities lead to sustained change, and that collaboration and learning together for social change is a utopian dream. Progress is achieved when protagonists act in a mode of learning and accompaniment through the enfoldment of a long-term process of capacity building individuals, institution and communities for the betterment of society. Such a process views learning as the motivating impulse for growth and respects the knowledge that each of one possesses at a given moment.

Point 9

"The development of institutions is connected to the growth of the individual and the community." The individual, community, and institutions are three primary participants in the process of social change. A constant process of action, reflection and dialogue, reciprocity, and collaboration characterize these three protagonists. Service to

others for the betterment of the community ties them together in a common purpose. Each action pursued by one contributes to the betterment of the whole.

There is a need for the individual, institution, and community to avoid the inclination to compete over resources, desire unbridled freedom, or demand independence. At a fundamental level, the relationship between these three participants should be characterized by reciprocity, harmony, and interconnectedness. Their actions coalesce once their intentions are dominated by service to the common good. Their reality is interconnected and the development and progress of one leads to the development of the others.

Towards Future Research

Examples like the ICBP provided in the study form the basis upon which institutional action can be strengthened and lessons learned could be applied in action. As such, other examples of training for ICB will shed light on the multifaceted dimensions of ICB that have yet to be explored. Such research will assist CBOs, to recognize the need to participate in educational programs that increase their effectiveness, which will impact the degree to which they are able to contribute to the communities that they serve. There is a need for academic research that provides multiple examples of training programs that build institutional capacity.

As was mentioned in the first Chapter, there is a need for greater analysis and evaluation of program examples (Wilson, 1997). In particular, it would be beneficial to outline the distinct characteristics of educational environments and curriculum that promote effective institutional action; core concepts that underlie curriculum for this purpose; the characteristics of a learning process that ICB requires; and the benefits of

such institutional programs. Likewise, once institutional action has an impact on individuals and communities, studies can explore the effect of institutional transformation on individual and community change. Additional questions for further research into the learning process associated ICB might include: What is the relationship between the individual, the community and institutions? What are the characteristics of a learning process associated with capacity building in the individual, the community and/or the institutions? What is the relationship between the generation, application and diffusion of knowledge and institutional capacity building?

Conclusion

In this study, I have tried to capture an example of a Foundation whose work in the field of ICB remains at an early stage. Nevertheless, their experience has provided a rich model through which other organizations can benefit. During my conversations with Sally and Jane, I was left with a vision of growth for the future—a vision that included the participation of hundreds of thousands more individuals in this path towards change. As I end this project, I am left with a tremendous sense of hope for the learning process associated with institutional capacity building for social change.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions for the CBO Coordinator

Please narrate the experiences of your CBO over the last five years:

a. How and where did it begin?
b. Why did you choose to begin a CBO?
c. What is the social and cultural context within which it is located?
d. Can you describe the details surrounding the work of the CBO and how it has changed over the last five years?
e. How have you grown as an individual as a result of this experience?
f. How has the community been influenced by the CBO?
g. Can you share a story of an individual or community that has been influenced by the work of your CBO?
h. How does your CBO seek to build capacity in others?
i. What was the greatest challenge that you had to overcome as a coordinator of the CBO?

Please describe the impact of the educational process on your CBO:

a. What have you learned as a participant in the educational institutional capacity building process?
b. What have you learned about the educational requirements needed to run a CBO?
c. Are there any skills, qualities, attitudes or habits that you feel you had developed while participating in the educational process?
d. What is the nature of the relationship between your CBO and the Foundation?
e. How does the Foundation accompany the CBO on a regular basis? Do you believe it has or has not helped your organization grow and learn? In what ways?
f. What have you learned from working with an organization like the Foundation?

General questions regarding the Institutional Capacity Building Programs (ICBP):

a. What is the nature of institutional capacity building?
b. How do the educational environment and materials used by the Institutional Capacity Building Program foster the enhancement of seven capabilities needed for community-based organizations to carry out programs of social and economic development?

c. What are the characteristics of the learning process fostered by the collaboration of the Foundation and community-based organizations?
d. Does the implementation of the Environmental Action Program and the Junior Youth Empowerment Program through community-based organizations lead to social and material development for rural communities in China? If so, then how? If not, then why not?

Appendix B

Interview Questions for the Foundation's Facilitator

Please narrate your experiences as a facilitator working with the CBO over the last five years:

j. How did the relationship between the Foundation and the CBO begin?
k. What is the nature of the relationship between the CBO and the Foundation? How has it evolved over the last five years?
l. How did you identify the CBO coordinator and how did you assist him/her to implement the CBO in their community?
m. What is the social and cultural context within which it is located?
n. How has the community been influenced by the work of the CBO?
o. Can you describe the details surrounding the work of the CBO and how it has changed over the last five years?
p. Over the last five years working with this CBO, how have you practically supported the work of the CBO? How have you grown as a facilitator as a result of this experience?
q. Can you share a story regarding how the Foundation supported the work of the CBO over the last five years?
r. How did the Foundation seek to build capacity in this CBO over the last five years?
s. What was the greatest challenge that you had to overcome as a facilitator?

Please describe the impact of the educational process on the CBO:

g. As a facilitator, what have you learned about the educational requirements needed to run a CBO?
h. Are there any skills, qualities, attitudes or habits that you feel have been developed by participants in the educational process?
i. How does the Foundation accompany the CBO on a regular basis? Do you believe it has or has not helped the organization grow and learn? In what ways?
j. Can you please describe the teaching-learning experience at the seminars.
k. How does the foundation share learning among the multiple CBOs it supports?
l. Do you think that the educational environment is transformational? If so, how?

General questions regarding the Institutional Capacity Building Programs (ICBP):

e. What is the nature of institutional capacity building?
f. How do the educational environment and materials used by the Institutional Capacity Building Program foster the enhancement of seven capabilities needed for community-based organizations to carry out programs of social and economic development?
g. What are the characteristics of the learning process fostered by the collaboration of the Foundation and community-based organizations?
h. Does the implementation of the Environmental Action Program and the Junior Youth Empowerment Program through community-based organizations lead to social and material development for rural communities in China? If so than how? If not then why not?